

CHRISTIAN COURIER

October 20, 2003

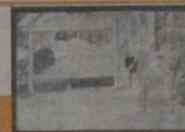
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death and hope p. 6**



58th year of publication

Liberia – a day in the life of a relief worker

Matthew Pugh

It's shortly after 9:30 a.m. in the administration office on the ELWA (Eternal Love Winning Africa) compound in Monrovia, Liberia. The temperature outside is rapidly heating up and the room is beginning to feel like a kiln. Steve Kai, head of food distribution for the Association of Evangelicals (AEL) is overseeing the measurements for emergency relief rations that will be distributed to refugees (internally displaced people or IDPs) in three separate centers around Monrovia.

The ration packages each contain four and one half kilograms of white rice, a staple in the Liberian diet, one liter of vegetable oil in a tied off plastic bag, and a small can of fish.

Kai expects to feed roughly 80 families today, each family aver-

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aging seven members. Families will receive one ration package that will last them about two days. He is able to conduct these emergency food distributions

around Monrovia through funding from World Relief, the humanitarian organization of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE).

Many of the refugees receiving

food today previously occupied displacement shelters outside of Monrovia, but were forced to flee them when rebel skirmishes erupted. As they entered Monrovia, they had their names recorded during disaster relief assessments conducted by AEL.

In order to receive rations today, the refugees must have had their names recorded. No name, no food. This helps to prevent non-refugees and community locals from taking advantage of the distributions.

Because they are emergency rations, once the food is gone, that's it. These people will not have anything to eat until another distribution takes place, which could be weeks from now.

Kai and his helpers hustle to finish measuring the ration packages and quickly load them

into an SUV. The first distribution is at the Livap camp, approximately eight kms away.

The Need is Great

The road to Livap is rough. Gravel crunches under the truck's knobby tires as the driver carefully navigates around ditches, mud holes and small craters. High grass lines either side of the narrow drive, and a group of half-naked children wade in a nearby marsh.

We reach the refugee shelter – an old abandoned school of sorts, cold-looking and dilapidated. Heads pop out of the building's glassless windows, and within seconds hundreds of people surround the truck.

Kai takes command and instructs them to form a line behind the vehicle. The line
see pg. 2...

The kingdom of heaven is like a pumpkin patch

Kathy L. Gilbert

Farmington, NM. (UMNS)—Once upon a time, there was a young man who didn't know what to do.

His father said, "Son, you have always liked to grow things, why don't you be a farmer?"

So he planted corn and peas and threw out a few pumpkin seeds.

It was the pumpkins that people loved. Folks came from near and far to buy the big orange vegetables. The young man thought to himself, "What I need is a thousand pumpkin patches just like this all across the U.S."

And that is how Richard Hamby became "the pumpkin man."

smile and gentle manner, he is a man who seems surprised that, 30 years later, he is still making a living raising pumpkins.

"It's sort of magical in that it started small and it just evolved and it produces a substantial amount of money. It's all based on trust," he says.

His dream of a thousand pumpkin patches almost came true this year. His company, Pumpkin Patch USA, will deliver pumpkins to 988 churches in 42 states during October.

Hamby only sends his pumpkins to churches or other non-profit organizations, and his crops have helped churches build homes for the homeless, send youth on countless mission trips and even bring people to Christ.

You see, in the right hands, pumpkins can perform miracles.

A healing patch

The Rev. Rob Parsons saw pumpkins heal his community after Hurricane Andrew struck Florida in 1992.

"It was my first appointment, Faith United Methodist Church in Miami," he recalls. "I came in June, and Hurricane Andrew hit us at the end of August. In the middle of all the chaos, someone

said to me, 'By the way, we ordered some pumpkins.'"

At the time, Parsons thought a truckload of pumpkins was the last

thing he needed. But when the pumpkins arrived, they gave the community a reason to gather – and heal.

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Pumpkin miracles

Hamby's life does sound a lot like a fairy tale. With his sweet

News

Cuba imprisons Christian labour leaders

Gideon Strauss

The Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC) has embarked on a campaign of protest against the unjust imprisonment of six Christian labour leaders.

In a massive crackdown earlier this year on non-violent activists working for human rights and civic freedoms, the Castro regime arrested almost 80 dissidents. Among these were the six Christian trade union leaders, all of whom were sentenced to long prison terms.

Pedro Pablo Alvarez Ramos, secretary general of the Consejo Unitario de Trabajadores Cubanos (CUTC): 25 years

Carmelo Díaz Fernández, director of the CUTC news agency: 20 years

Oscar Espinosa Chepe, journalist for CUTC: 16 years

Víctor Rolando Arroyo, CUTC

delegate for the Pinar del Río province: 26 years

Alfredo Felipe Fuentes, CUTC delegate for the Havana province: 26 years

Adolfo Fernandez Sainz, freelance journalist and leader of the Christian Workers' Movement (Movimiento de Trabajadores Cristianos): 15 years

In an intentional effort to isolate them, these prisoners of conscience are being held hundreds of kilometres away from their homes. Family members have a hard time visiting them since getting to these far-off parts of Cuba is expensive and transport is scarce. It takes several days of travel to get to these prisons from where their families live. Family visits are allowed only three times per month and are kept brief. Telephone calls are restricted. And the prisoners are denied participation in religious services.

The health-care facilities at the prisons are dangerously inadequate. Necessary drugs are not available and sanitary conditions are deplorable. One of the prisoners, Oscar Espinosa Chepe, has a deteriorating health condition that cannot be properly treated by the prison. His imprisonment amounts to a death sentence. According to Chepe's wife and 95-year old mother, his communication with them in the very rare visits allowed has become incoherent, and it appears that he is delusional, either because of the lack of treatment for his liver condition or because of the administration of psychoactive drugs.

The World Confederation of Labour – the 26 million member international trade union movement to which the CLAC belongs – challenged the Cuban government on these actions. The Cuban government then denied the very

existence of the Consejo Unitario de Trabajadores Cubanos, arguing that the prisoners did not represent any workers and accusing them of treason against the Cuban revolution. But the Consejo Unitario, an independent trade union supported by Christian working people, had applied for legal recognition and had made every effort to comply with Cuban law. Over 400 workers signed the application, providing their names and addresses – and exposing themselves to reprisal by the government. The application was sent to the Cuban Minister of Labour on July 14, 1995. But the Cuban authorities never responded to the application and continue to refuse to recognize the existence of the Consejo Unitario.

To get a job in many of the government-owned workplaces in Cuba, workers have to provide letters that prove their loyalty to

the Cuban revolution. The only letters recognized are from the Cuban Communist Party, the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, or the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution. Members of the Christian labour movement are not provided with such letters.

The Christian Labour Association of Canada is organizing a campaign of protest against the unjust imprisonment of Christian labour leaders in Cuba. You can obtain a protest card to sign by emailing Sybil de Mos at sdemos@clac.ca. You can send the signed card in to CLAC at no cost. CLAC will deliver these signed cards to the Cuban ambassador in Canada.

Gideon Strauss is the Research and Education Director of the Christian Labour Association of Canada.

Liberia

...continued from p. 1

quickly deteriorates into a cluster. Tensions mount as hungry people jockey for better positions to receive food.

Though he would like to feed them all, Kai must stand firm and feed only those who have been identified. This causes outcries of frustration and confusion among some. The swindlers, however, know that they've been had and leave.

A small level of order comes over the crowd and the distribution begins. People step forward and give their name. Kai scrolls down the list, marks their names with their thumb print and gives a guy on the truck a nod.

Relief then elation washes over the faces of the first people to receive their emergency rations. An elderly woman, barely strong enough to carry her bag of rice, dances around in circles. "She is happy because she can't remember when she had this much food," says Musu, the appointed "leader" of the center.

Happy too, perhaps, because the food will also take her mind off of her poor living situation. It's the rainy season in Liberia and the center has virtually no roof. Nor do the people have blankets.

"We've been at this center for three months and the conditions are deplorable," said Musu. "People are sick, it isn't safe to sleep, the water isn't safe to drink

and these are the first rations that we have ever received."

It takes less than 30 minutes to reach its distribution limit for the Livap center. About 50 families are fed. The truck's gate is closed and its engine fired up. As the SUV rolls away, people cling to its sides. They ask through partially rolled down windows, "Will you be coming back with more food?"

The question goes unanswered as the team heads to the next distribution.

Next Stop

A few miles away and a hard right turn leads through the center of Gobachop market. Kiosks line either side of the pulverized thoroughfare. Trash, mud and puddles of stagnant water cover the road. A young girl bathes in the filth. The smell of human waste wafts through the air.

Like a body of water, the crowd parts as the Cruiser edges forward. A final parting of people reveals the entrance to the second refugee center at St. Kizito Catholic School.

We step out onto the dusty lot. Before the truck's gate can be opened, a swarm of more than 300 children surrounds us. They are overjoyed by our arrival. They cling to our legs and garments and begin shouting, "Food, food."

Although they are not starving,

many are suffering from malnutrition and have sinking, colorless eyes.

John, the center leader, explains that the people are eating whatever they can and have not received a distribution for weeks. There have also been two outbreaks of cholera and one of chicken pox at the center.

Though unable to give exact figures, he estimates that there are more than 5,000 people at this particular center, including 90 or more pregnant women. They've been here since mid-July.

The situation in Liberia is taking its toll on the vulnerable – the elderly, pregnant women and especially the children. A 14-year-old girl named Orethe explains her situation. "My father was killed a couple years ago by a stray bullet and I have had no way to go to school since," she says. "My mother left a few days ago to take my little brother to the hospital. He's very sick." Orethe has not heard from her mother since she left. A few bites of commmeal are all that she has had to eat for days.

Shortly after noon, the once buzzing crowd has dwindled, and the second distribution is over. Of the thousands of refugees around St. Kizito, we were able to feed about 210.

Relief and Frustration

The road to the third center at

Carver Mission School Institute bends up a gently sloping hill. Palm and banana trees sway in the warm, salty breeze. The Atlantic Ocean is visible in the distance.

This time no one greets the team as it arrives. Most of the people are inside the school's two small buildings, trying to escape from the scorching, mid-day sun. Before long, they trickle in from all directions, but do not overwhelm. They seem much weaker than those at the first two centers, and the children appear uninterested by our presence. Kai is able to keep order with relative ease.

This is the smallest of the three centers. Though Carver is small, it is not without its problems. Malnutrition and cholera have invaded.

Ten minutes after arriving, the food drop is over. Many people walk away empty-handed. We could only feed about 63 people of the 200 or so here.

Kai has led more emergency food distributions around Monrovia in the last few months than he can remember, but he has not totally hardened. Both relief and frustration are evident as Kai wipes his forehead and sighs.

"We do what we can," he says.

In the capital, Monrovia, many hover on the edge of survival as chronic food shortages push the price of a cup of rice to \$1.20 –

more than a day's wages in Liberia. (Note this price is fluctuating). Equipped by World Relief, local evangelical churches recently distributed rice, cooking oil and fish to hundreds of hungry men, women and children. For many, this was their first proper meal in more than three weeks.

Even before the most recent wave of violence, more than half a million people were already displaced within the country, according to World Food Program reports. The arrival of West African peacekeeping troops has helped to bring a measure of stability to this volatile place, but there is still much need for peace, stability, and provisions in Liberia.

Using its resources in the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, CRWRC is also supporting a program that is being implemented by World Relief Canada and the Association of Evangelicals of Liberia (AEL). A shipment of food has already left Canada and will soon be providing for Liberians who have been displaced by the fighting.

If you would like to contribute to CRWRC's ongoing work in Liberia, please contact us or send in your donations marked "Liberia Recovery."

Visit the World Relief website: <http://link.crosswalk.com/UM/T.asp?A1.8.15111.4.1225221>.

Politics

In the pumpkin patch

Kathy L. Gilbert

Farmington, N.M. (UMNS) – First thing in the morning, the air is crisp and cool. Two hours later, it is hot and dry.

Wind blows the silky fine dust everywhere. At the end of the day, the workers in the pumpkin fields will have enough dirt on their bodies to start their own pumpkin patch.

From dawn till dusk, more than 400 workers will stoop, cut, grab, toss and load pumpkins into cavernous 18-wheel trucks for delivery to locations across the United States.

Twenty varieties of pumpkins cover more than 1,600 acres. The vegetables range from tiny to enormous. Some are white, some are red, and some are covered with warts.

Workers form a human chain and toss the pumpkins to each other until they reach the conveyor belt hooked into the back of the trailers. Once the pumpkins are on the conveyor belt, workers inside the trailers inspect and stack them. Those that don't pass inspection come flying out of the back of the truck.

The pumpkins can't be too ripe or too green, and they must have a "handle."

Pumpkins

... cont. from pg. 1

"We made \$9,000 that year," he says.

He says pumpkins have brought people into the church, and he knows of cases where pastors have even led some people to Christ in the pumpkin patch.

"In a pumpkin field, people lose the stereotype of what a Christian is and just open up," he says.

Perfect place for pumpkins

The Hamby's first grew their pumpkins in North Carolina, but Hurricane Hugo changed that when it struck in 1989.

"Hurricane Hugo wiped out my fields, so I had to look for another place to grow my pumpkins," Richard says. He found the perfect place on land owned by the Navajo Nation. Pumpkins are grown through the Navajo Agricultural Products Industry, the Navajo Nation's farming and agribusiness enterprise.

Farmington only gets 4 to 6 inches of rain a year. The irrigation system set up on the Navajo land lets the farmers control the amount

"People like to have a bit of the stem on their pumpkins," says Tina Jones of Pumpkin Patch USA, the company that leases the land from the Navajo Nation.

Old yellow school buses load the workers and take them to the seemingly endless miles of pumpkins. Most of the workers are Navajo. For the approximately 45 days of harvest, they will put in long hours, seven days a week, doing back-breaking labor.

"It's hot and it's hard, but it's a job," a young Navajo man says. "It keeps me out of trouble," he adds, laughing as he bends to pick up another pumpkin.

At noon, the lunch wagon – a Frito-Lay truck in a previous life – rumbles into the field to bring a hot lunch and a much-needed break to the workers.

"They have to rotate jobs," Richard Hamby, owner of Pumpkin Patch USA, says. "One man can't stoop over and pick up pumpkins all day."

When Hamby started the pumpkin patch business almost 30 years ago, he touched every pumpkin that went out.

"I was the best pumpkin stacker in the business," he says, with pride. Today, Navajo workers do most of the picking, tossing and

of water the crops need. Pumpkins are pampered in their soft beds of silky, brown dirt.

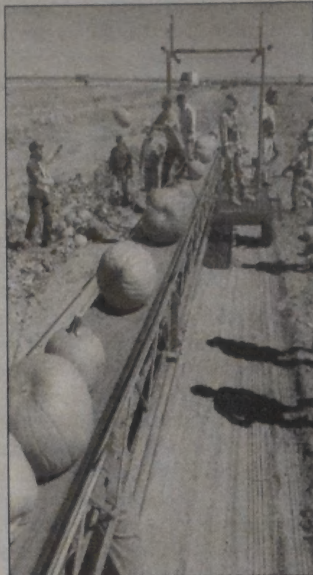
The weather is perfect for pumpkins – hot during the day and cool at night. They grow plump, round and orange just at the right time for harvest in late September and early October.

Most of the workers harvesting the pumpkins are from the Navajo reservation. Pumpkin Patch USA pumps more than \$2 million into the local Navajo economy through jobs and land rent permits.

Stepping out on faith

Tina Jones, chief financial officer for Pumpkin Patch USA, says the best thing about her job is knowing she is really making a difference.

"Last year, the individual churches that sold pumpkins kept for their own various projects over \$3.5 million," she says. "They used their money for hospice, for mission trips, for Habitat for Humanity – a lot of different projects. It's a great feeling to be



stacking. When the work picks up, migrant workers from Mexico help.

By the time the last pumpkin is gleaned, more than 700 trucks will have gone out.

Watching an 18-wheel truck make its slow way out of the field, Hamby muses, "Every year, we think we will never get to the end. But we always do."

a part of an organization that provides those kinds of benefits."

Jones says it is a business based on faith.

Pumpkin Patch USA grows the pumpkins and ships them to churches at no charge. The churches take the pumpkins on consignment and are not responsible for anything broken, damaged, stolen, rotten or left over at the end of the sale. Back at pumpkin headquarters, the staff just waits for the churches to send the money.

"What happens is we incur a tremendous amount of expense before we ever ship the first pumpkin – millions of dollars," Jones says. "And then we send them to the churches completely on faith, on trust that they will set up their patch and sell pumpkins and be diligent in that process."

The churches keep 25 to 40 percent of the profit, depending on their gross sales.

Kathy Gilbert is a United Methodist News Service news writer.



Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

The end of the 'first Christendom'

One of the more significant books to come out last year was Philip Jenkins' *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). Jenkins' prediction of a dynamic Christian future in Africa and Asia is impressive enough, but I was particularly intrigued by his history, especially the tragic fate of what might be called the "first Christendom" in the old eastern Roman world.

According to Jenkins, up until the 12th or 13th century it is very likely that Christians constituted the majority of inhabitants in North Africa and what we now call the Middle East. Although they had been ruled for centuries by Islamic rulers, beginning in the decades after Muhammad's death in 632, succeeding generations stubbornly held onto their Christian faith, despite the hostility of their foreign rulers.

Furthermore, because these lands were far more densely populated than western Europe, it is possible that more Christians were actually living in Asia than in Europe when Thomas Aquinas was writing his *Summa Theologica* and other works. Jenkins comes to a stunning conclusion: "On balance, I would argue that at the time of the Magna Carta or the Crusades, if we imagine a typical Christian, we should still be thinking not of a French artisan, but of a Syrian peasant or Mesopotamian town dweller, an Asian not a European" (p. 24). This means that, at the height of medieval Christendom, most of the world's Christians were living under rulers hostile to their faith. Even as recently as the turn of the last century, according to Paul Marshall, nearly a third of the inhabitants of the Middle East were still Christians.

How then did the first Christendom die? According to the Egyptian-Jewish scholar who writes under the pseudonym, *Bat Ye'or* (Daughter of the Nile), the Muslim conquerors of the eastern Roman territories subjected their Christian and Jewish inhabitants to unrelenting social, economic and legal pressure to convert to the conquering religion. For example, non-Muslims were made to pay much higher taxes than Muslims, in addition to being burdened with other discriminatory measures. Even when there was no outright persecution, such policies, maintained over the course of some fourteen centuries, provided a substantial incentive to convert. The first generations held out, but eventually such policies had their inevitable effect, leading to the long term decline of the first Christendom and its replacement by Muslim majorities within the *dar al-Islam*, or the territory under Muslim rule.

Middle Eastern Christians tend not to receive a very good press in the west, despite their status as the aboriginal inhabitants of the region. But I myself have come to have a great deal of admiration for them. After all, these are believers who have held firm against formidable odds for more than fifty generations, when most of their co-religionists did not. In the latter half of the twentieth century, by contrast, western churches, particularly in Europe, emptied within a very few years, and for seemingly less significant reasons.

The Egyptian Copts, the Maronites of Lebanon, the Assyrians of Iraq, and others are the first Christendom. The west is the second Christendom. The third Christendom, if Jenkins is correct, will be centred in Africa, but also in Korea and China. Yet I wonder whether, in the providence of God, there might not be a significant future role to be played by the descendants of the original Aramaic-speaking followers of Jesus Christ – if not in the Middle East, then perhaps in the diaspora.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ont., and is the author of *Political Visions and Illusions* (InterVarsity Press).



Editorials

Here I stand

It's one of the dramatic moments of the Reformation before it even had a name. It is forever inscribed in our collective memory. Gathered in the hall are the most powerful men in the world – those with power over the soul as well as those with power over the body. No, the Pope himself, the one who represents Christ the Lord on this earth, is not here personally, but there are those dressed in the bright robes of ecclesiastical office who speak with his authority. And the Emperor himself is here with his court and advisors, a ruler with vastly greater authority than any of the presidents and prime ministers of present-day Europe.

Over against these powerful, colorful figures stands a lone, powerless monk. He has been told that his life is on the line and he believes it.

He has been called before the highest authorities of his time – authorities recognized as the representatives of God on earth – to recant, to confess that what he has written over the past few years was mistaken.

All he has to do is say, "Revoco!" and his life will be spared and chances are he will be able to go back to his former life, back to serving God as part of his order.

Who do you think you are, Martin – others and he himself must have hissed to him again and again – to think you know better than all those learned and pious leaders of the church over hundreds of years, better than the theologians, the cardinals, the Pope, better than the very elders Christ has appointed to rule his church? Has God made you so much wiser?

Who knows what kind of torments of soul, what wrestling with himself and the devil he underwent the night before? But now he gazes back eye to eye with all those high officials and he says, I can't. Not unless you prove from Scripture that what I have preached and written is wrong.

He ends with the impressive words: "My conscience is captive to the Word of God. Thus I cannot and will not recant, for going against my conscience is neither safe nor salutary. I can do no other, here I stand. God help me. Amen."

The words of a single man. Whether he spoke them boldly and defiantly or humbly and with a quaver in his voice, I don't know.

I'm sure many of those in the room thought, "Poor fool. Poor impotent fool. Doesn't he realize what he's up against? They'll lead him like a lamb to the slaughter."

It wasn't the first time in the long history of Christendom that a bold soul spoke up against the corruption of the Church. The Middle Ages spawned critics in as great a number as it spawned churchmen whose favorite pastimes were eating and hunting. Some were burned, some tolerated, and some founded orders that took vows of poverty.

What was it about Luther's stance that resonated so to fellow believers and that still resonates across the ages? Is it simply that he was the founder not of another institution within the Church of Rome but one outside it?

That was certainly not what Luther thought he was doing when he spoke those powerful words at the Diet of Worms. He was not setting himself up as an authority over against and outside the Church's traditions, councils and hierarchy. On the contrary, he thought he was recalling them to the very authority that was the ground of their offices – Scripture.

It wasn't so much because of what he as a solitary individual effectively did there at Worms or at Wittenberg that changed the face of Christendom. It was because the position, the stand, that Luther took there was *not* unique. It was exemplary, repeatable, a model that every other poor fool in the Holy Roman Empire could take. And many did.

Often the central drama of the Reformation is presented purely as a spiritual one. It was that, but only if we understand "spiritual" to include the way one relates to the totality of his life-world. The burden of guilt that Luther wrestled with was not just a spiritual burden. He was not just a peculiarly sensitive soul who thrashed about in his cell at night fighting the devil and the temptations of the flesh. In the lives of the German people the spiritual burden included the weight of the Church and all the requirements, taxes and restrictions that it imposed on an already difficult existence, including the extravagancies of churchmen who lived like princes. The people struggled under the weight of a system that claimed to mediate to them the blessings, the justice and the love of God. They felt in their very flesh and blood as well as in their souls that the unwieldy structure called the Church was not a clear, transparent stream. On the contrary, it was turgid as mud. It did not allow them to stand upright with a clear conscience, not ever.

But many believers had already stood before kings and emperors to declare their faith. In the days of the Roman Empire many died for refusing to recant. What makes Luther so special, not just for his time but still for ours?

Others stood before those who did not rule in the name of God and his Christ. Luther was standing up against the authority of the officers appointed to rule both church and empire in the name of the same Lord that he professed. He refused to accept the authority of those whom Paul says are placed there by God.

He did not simply reject their authority. He said he was willing to recant – if they could show from Scripture that he was in error. His words about conscience do not elevate the conscience above the authority of Pope and Emperor; he speaks of a conscience "captive to the Word of God."

Luther did not say that everything he had written was without error. Not at all. But he held firmly that the criticisms

he made of the Church about the way it kept the people in bondage to guilt and exploited that guilt was contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The heart of the Church's authority is the proclamation of forgiveness and liberty in Jesus Christ. The Church is authorized in the name of Christ to authorize each and every believer to take into his heart and into his mouth the authority of God's Word.

What Luther affirmed and what is implicit in the gospel from the very beginning is the rupture of the pyramid of power and authority. No structure erected by the word of man, no state, no church, no scientific authority, no economic system, no prophet or genius, not even an angel can claim ultimate and final authority on earth.

On the basis of the cross and Jesus' resurrection from the grave, all authority has been relativized by being put under him. In him, by the power and authority of the Lord of heaven and earth, we are all authorized to stand before the authorities of this present world and point them to the source and the basis of their authority.

It is because on the basis of God's Word Luther knows there is authority and what it is for that he is able to stand boldly before the representatives of that authority and tell them they are abusing their office.

Later Luther even speaks of the Pope as anti-Christ. The entire priestly edifice built up over hundreds of years on the Word of the Apostles and the blood of the martyrs, by pious pastors and bishops, by councils and decrees – this accumulated labor of faith has turned poisonous. As Luther saw it, by obfuscating the simple, central teaching of forgiveness (justification) by faith on the merit of Christ alone, the Church blocked the flow of grace. And it had therefore no authority over the soul of Luther.

You can see why this is unnerving for those who want a stable order. It is very destabilizing. By a shift in perspective, what was one moment legitimate authority suddenly stands exposed as sham authority. Luther is like the little boy in the legend who suddenly cries, "The king isn't wearing any clothes!"

The German people looked, and many of them saw that it was true. The authority of the Pope and his councils dissipated before their eyes like a bad dream. Others were not so easily shed of that authority. What followed was several generations of conflict. The recently released film Luther (see review) is right in suggesting that Luther could not have foreseen the energies and turmoil his stance would release in the world of his day.

But faith in Christ and putting oneself under his Kingship and authority does not produce uniformity, docility and passivity; it stirs up, mobilizes, gives us a voice that echoes his authority.

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada stands before the highest court in the land and demands to know by what authority it seeks to redefine what God has instituted. The Christian Labour Association of Canada stands before secular union and corporation alike and asks what is the purpose of this work being done. Christian school societies across the country prod children to look into the authority behind what is being passed down as knowledge and wisdom. CPJ stands before the power of the global economic system that is supposed to be feeding and clothing us and enabling us to share together the earth's bounties and blessings and asks whether it is doing the very opposite. Isn't it burdening us, burning us out, turning us into slaves, dispossessing and exploiting others and poisoning our planet?

That too is a Lutheran stand. The Lord is the source of all authority in heaven and on earth, and he has authorized us by his Word to hold that authority answerable to him who sent his Son to reign that we may share in his gracious, loving rule.

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Letters

Food for thought

Martin Luther (1483-1547), John Calvin (1509-1564), GuiHaume Groen van Prinsterer (1801-1876), and Dr. Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) are not unfamiliar names. You may have read what they wrote many years ago. The titles of their major published works have a familiar ring to them: "The Institutes of the Christian Religion," "Unbelief and Revolution," the (6) "Stone Lectures" on Calvinism, just to name a few. "Well, not quite," you say, "I have read about what they wrote, said, or stood for." Fair enough. After all, Kuyper alone wrote 223 published works. That's not counting the editorials he wrote first as Associate Editor of "De Heraut," a weekly, and later as editor of the daily "De Standaard" (the re-named Heraut), and not counting what he wrote as "congressman" in the Second Chamber of Parliament, starting in 1874 and as Prime Minister, starting in 1901, and not counting all his earlier printed sermons as pastor. Who has read them all? Well, come to think of it, perhaps our good pastor Dr. William Koopmans has. That wouldn't surprise me.

All of these names are part of history in The Netherlands now hundreds of years old. When I say "history," I mean part of the history of the churches of the Reformation, the history of Calvinism, the history of the development of a Calvinistic world view. At its core stood the claim. *"In the total expanse of human life there is not a single square inch of which Christ, who alone is sovereign, does not declare, 'That is mine!'"* In short: The Sovereignty of God and Sphere Sovereignty. These were big

ideas translated by very ordinary folks (the "Little People") into actual courses of action in society.

You can trace the equivalent history about Germany, England (including the Commonwealth and thus Canada), Belgium, Poland, France, the United States and a few others I have forgotten. Except for Luther and Calvin, only the names of leading national personalities change. Their Story is the same: persecutions, struggle and sacrifice as builders in the major areas of religion and the church, of education and the university, of politics and government—a fight on every front.

Not the least of that action was the struggle for equal rights in grade school education, which took place in the 1870's and later, a free university. The prevailing liberal philosophy in the funded public school system had resulted in its dechristianization. The fear now was that this would result in the ultimate dechristianization of the nation. The parents of the non-funded and non-state school movements (You can still see the name of their schools on school yard entry gates in some towns: The School With The Bible) began their struggle with Kuyper in the lead, claiming that "the state must meticulously respect the parents' demand of conscience. The state should, in all fairness and as elemental justice, reimburse the non-state schools the amount of money which those schools were saving the state." Familiar language, is it not? In time, that struggle was successful. Equity in education was achieved. It may be that many of you gradu-

ated from those schools.

Let's go fast forward to September - October, 2003, in Peterborough. On the table in the election is the government's legislative enactment: the Ontario Equity In Education Tax Credit, to be called into law effective January 1, 2004. Finally that struggle of close to 50 years appears to have been won right here at home as well. A repeat of history in the Netherlands and elsewhere. A truly historical event, Parents of faith-based schools will receive modest funding assistance from the government in power. Two major opposition parties campaign on the promise to cancel the credit, if elected.

You would have expected that the several all-candidates meetings in this area to be full with elated if not grateful supporters of the legislation; publicly asking questions of those candidates campaigning to cancel the credit, holding them to account, and lending moral support in public to the candidate speaking in favour of the local Rhema Christian School and the measure affecting it, which is said to be so close to our collective hearts. After all, equity in education is a historical battle with a principled pedigree familiar to us.

The government candidate stood all alone on this point. There were no supporters of Rhema or the issue of equity in education in evidence, or if one or two were in attendance, I didn't see, recognize or hear them. The local media was not interested because there was no demonstrated local public interest in the well being of Rhema. It is not a question of who and what you voted for. That is your private business. Neither is it a question of election outcome. That would most likely not have changed. The tax credit will now be cancelled by the new government as soon as the Legislature is called into session. Gives us something to think about, does it not?

Ralph L. De Groot

In response to "Is Haiti facing a voodoo-Christian showdown?"

It was good to see a well-written headline article in the CC addressing this real and prevalent issue. As foreigners living and working in Haiti for a Christian NGO our response to the headline question is a resounding YES. Haiti is, and has always, faced a showdown (or battle if you will) with religions such as voodoo. We feel that Christianity is in a constant battle with other religions around the world and voodoo is the most prevalent in this isle. Officially sanctioning voodoo does not change the fact that voodoo has been prevalent since independence.

Another comment that caught our eye is the quote from the North American Missionary, which states, "I don't see religion as a battle." We, as Christians in the world, and also Haiti, are in a constant struggle, or battle with evil. We feel that the Bible is quite clear that our fight here on earth is not against flesh and blood but with the forces of evil. (see Ephesians 6:12)

Although voodoo is in fact "an essential part of Haiti's identity" it is unfathomable to say as your quote from the unidentified Haitian says, "voodoo has done everything for Haiti," when in fact Haiti and Haitians have suffered immensely since 1804. Could this be as a result of voodoo?

We feel it is not despite voodoo that the church is growing but because of it. Around the world wherever the church is persecuted, or at least threatened, the church grows. So we look forward to continued growth of the church in the "Pearl of the Antilles" which someday will send out missionaries to the world.

Edwin and Sylvia Dening
Port Au Prince, Haiti

In defense of Jim Payton

Mr. Hofman, after I read your letter I reread what Jim Payton wrote and I really must disagree with you. Yes, perhaps here and there some rewording was needed, and I would have added a comment about his style, but to give this paper a failing grade was, methinks, a little too strict. Even though I somewhat disagreed with the drawn conclusions, it was a rather good discussion.

Yes, Jim Payton may have said some things about Mr. Bush that you found very unflattering. But this is Canada. Eh! Here one often reads stuff about our leading politicians that are very unflattering as well. Yet, these writers are not thought of as illiterate and unpatriotic, they are just seen as writers whose upper-chamber noodles have gone wishy-washy.

You included an argument, however, that, in my humble opinion, needs more analysis. You said that Tom Brokaw's article clearly set forth what President Bush believed regarding WMD. But, let's face it, believing is not the same as a knowing for sure without any doubt. A belief in something is only as good as the information upon which it is based. And, as you well

know, the US intelligence community is very divided in its opinion of the validity of the WMD information.

Isn't it possible that the President's belief was based on incomplete information, and therefore inaccurate? And isn't it possible that this inaccuracy is open to interpretation?

Please, don't be too hard on Jim Payton for his comments on President Bush. After all, in the US press I have heard and read criticism of your President as well, and some it much harsher. I've heard words such as...committing a fraud on the American people...deceiving the American people...misleading.... And I believe these were words coming from Senators and Members of Congress; some were even Republican!

My final thought: Here in Canada we dearly hold academic freedom in high esteem. We firmly believe that this freedom is an integral part in the field of scholastic thinking and learning. Patriotism should not become a heavy weapon to belittle or destroy this freedom, no matter how much one disagrees.

Tom Abma, Niagara Falls

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Culture

Singing Terezin, a place of death and hope



Ruth Fazal on the violin
Renate Koke

Last night when I came home from the office I found a postcard from Germany among my mail. 'Having a wonderful time', my friends had written, 'lovely apartment, spectacular scenery, inexpensive and delicious meals in a very pretty little town with lots of half-timbered houses.' I turned it over and gasped, 'Grüsse aus dem historischen Wernigerode mit seiner schönen Umgebung' (Greetings from historical Wernigerode and its beautiful surroundings), it read.

You see, the town my friends were raving about was no ordinary one: it was one that I had traveled to with my mother years earlier. That trip had hardly been a holiday but rather a painful pilgrimage back to the place where she had experienced one of the most devastating times in her life. During the Second World War, when her family was arrested for their activities in the Dutch Underground, my mother and her sister were transported to a women's prison camp in that very place.

As the youngest member of the group, she knew Wernigerode as a place of hunger and exhaustion, of sickness and fear. It was a place that smelled of death, where her young, teenaged faith was tested, a place that has remained a wound and a touchstone. Wernigerode, the place historically entwined with the landscape of my mother's soul.

Our trip proved that in Wernigerode every attempt had been made to erase the vestiges of that period. The site of the camp is now a parking lot and no one at the local tourist office admitted to any recollection of the town's role during the war.

Yet as we all know, the often, and increasingly, handed-down memory of that time continues to shape our identity and understanding of who we are. The collective wound will not go away.

Was it an accident that my friends' postcard arrived the day that I was returning home with a briefcase full of information

about another place made infamous during the war – Terezin or Theresienstadt as it was renamed during the war? And what is it about that time that continues to draw us even if we ourselves have not lived through it? What is it that we are called to remember? And perhaps most essentially 'Where is God in the place of suffering?'

Ruth Fazal has composed a powerful and deeply moving work called Oratorio Terezin that grapples with those questions. (An Oratorio is the musical telling of a theme through various texts. The most famous Oratorio is probably Handel's *Messiah*). The work will be given its premiere on November 1 and 2 at the George Weston Recital Hall in North York.

Ruth Fazal is an acclaimed musician, heard frequently on the CBC. She is the concertmaster of all three orchestras of the Mississauga Symphonic Association, the Elora Festival Orchestra and the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir Orchestra. She has released many CD's and is also the Organist and Music Director at Little Trinity Anglican Church in downtown Toronto, where she is one of my colleagues. I sat down with Ruth to talk about her work.



Survivors of a concentration camp

Ruth, how did you come to write this piece?

I believe the Oratorio is an inspired piece, which is a big thing to say, but for a long time my prayer as a Christian has been, 'O God give me Your Heart!' Then about four years ago a friend gave me a collection of art and poetry by children interned in the Nazi concentration camp in Terezin between 1942-45, entitled *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* and the resonance of this work broke my heart. Perhaps most profoundly was the sense of hope that emanated from these poems that touched a deep belief in my own heart that God is sovereign, even in the most devastating situations.

It sounds as though you began with questions and moved to a point of hope?

Yes there is no denying the pain and anguish of God's people during the war and the questions associated with that time. Why did God seemingly let hatred and terror win the day? Why didn't he rescue them from their pain? Then as I began to look at the

Hebrew Scriptures, especially the prophetic writings (the Old Testament), the beating heart of God for his people Israel, longing to be in relation with them, overwhelmed me.

How did you fit all the strands together?

I wove together the children's poetry with Scripture. There is a children's choir which is obvious, since the poems were written by children. Five of the children will be coming from Slovakia, and 55, all auditioned from the greater Toronto area. There is an adult choir and there are three international soloists. The Welsh tenor Huw Priddy will sing the Voice of God, the local baritone Daniel Lichti will sing the Voice of the Prophet and the Dallas soprano Teresa Gomes voice will be the voice of suffering. She has no words.

Kirk Trevor, the current chief conductor of the Slovak Radio Orchestra, who was a student at the Guildhall School of Music when I was there will conduct the work.

What is so exciting to me is how much the children are responding to the music and loving it. Last week George Brady one of the very few survivors of Terezin came to speak to them about his sister Hana, (whose legacy is carried on in the bestselling children's book *Hana's Suitcase*) and they were enthralled. I am getting similar responses from the adult choir. They are also loving the score.

When it all comes together in the performance and they sing their parts, the moment will come when they hear the voice of the prophet and the cry of God. That will be a very profound moment.

What has the process been like for you?

It's been an experience of absolute joy and absolute pain every step of the way and has taken me to places in my own heart that were very difficult and very beautiful and tender.

How has the Jewish community responded so far?

The interesting thing is that when we scheduled the performance of this work for November, I had absolutely no idea that it was Holocaust Education Week, but it was, and God knew. The Jewish community has been very supportive and we are working in partnership with the Holocaust education week. B'nai Brith Canada has also

given us their support.

Why do you think God chose you, as a non-Jew to write this piece?

I don't know! I am a gentile, married to a Muslim, with a heart for God's people. My parents named me Ruth who would say to Naomi, 'Your people shall be my people, and your God my God.' God has given me a heart for his people, all his people. I haven't figured it all out yet, my responsibility is to be obedient.

Music gives me the language to express things that are close to my heart. At the same time I cannot speak about the Oratorio without speaking about God and specifically about my relationship with him. To do otherwise would be to deny who God is. My heart feels very tender and stirred. I feel very privileged to be part of something so special.

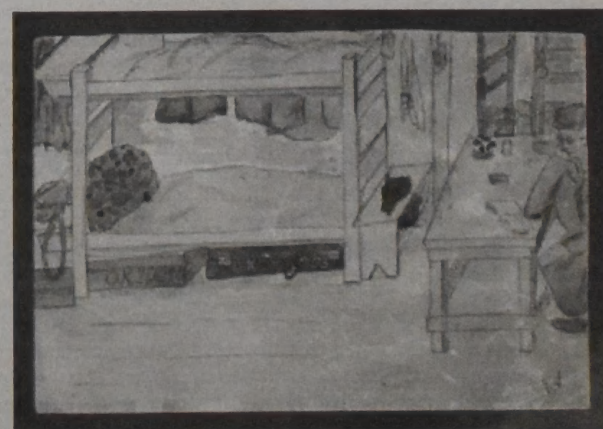
This message comes 53 years after the fact. What are you hoping for?

It's true that the generation coming near the end of their lives carries a tremendous amount of pain. The older they get the more difficult it often is. Unfortunately, I'm not sure it is going to get any easier. God longs to be in relationship with his people, many of whom feel God abandoned them in their darkest hour.

My hope and my prayer is that the Oratorio will give a place for people to reconsider the goodness of God in the midst of suffering – a God who invites us to a place of intimacy with him and a God who went before us. There are no easy answers only that assurance. In that way the Oratorio is not a feel-good piece; it is an invitation to intimacy with God. My longing is that we can be brought to the place where we can know and be thankful for God's goodness towards us.

(To read more about this piece visit the website www.oratorioterezin.com)

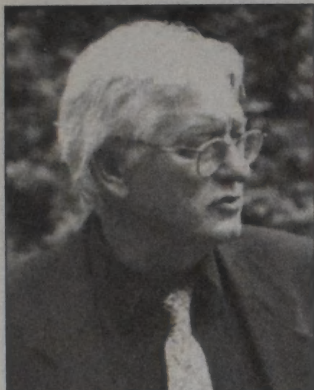
Renate Koke is Assistant Pastor at Little Trinity Anglican Church in Toronto



This untitled drawing is from the collection of "The children's drawings from Terezin (1942-1944)" in the The Jewish Museum in Prague.

Media

Does dogma exclude imagination?



A. James Reimer

A. James Reimer, *The Dogmatic Imagination: The Dynamics of Christian Belief*, Waterloo: Herald Press, 2003.

Paul Doerksen

A. James Reimer is a long-time theology professor at the Conrad Grebel University College (University of Waterloo). While he writes from within the Anabaptist tradition, this book draws from and shows a wide appreciation for other streams of Christian thought. The stated purpose of the book is to provide theological reflections that are easily accessible meditations on core Christian beliefs. The cover of the book signals immediately that this is not an ordinary book of theology. In a title that uses the term 'dogmatic,' we also find reference to 'imagination,' and 'dynamics,' along with an etching of William Blake's 'The Ancient of Days,' which (ironically) portrays God as a white-haired, white-bearded, powerful man. But the book does in fact engage the imagination in a dynamic way, precisely as it addresses issues of dogmatics (in the sense of theological beliefs that are part of the life of the church).

Faith as a game of Scrabble

Reimer opens with a compelling image of faith as a game of Scrabble, in that while there are certain givens such as the letter tiles, rules and limits, there is virtually unlimited freedom within the game itself as the players depend on each other for the possibility of continuing the game until the end. It is this sense of freedom and re-imagining anew each time the game is played that Reimer emphasizes over against the rigidity of putting together a jigsaw puzzle.

Given this image of pursuing theological truth within a life of faith that allows considerable room

for imagination, Reimer moves through many of the standard theological topics unencumbered by academic jargon or apparatus. Nonetheless, this should not be mistaken for a dumbing down process. Rather, the book is the work of a mature scholar who is able to distill his considerable expertise into accessible material without any hint of condescension to the reader. So his treatment of standard topics such as faith, the Bible, the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, salvation, and so on is often illumined by reference to art, novels, films, music or personal experience, while still making use of theological language in an easily-understood, natural way.

Each of Reimer's 24 brief chapters (three of which are sermons), then, deal with the basics of the Christian faith. Many of the topics are of the kind one would expect to find, while some are surprising and welcome. For example, he includes a chapter on experience early in the book, as well as a chapter on sexuality.

However, it is not unpredictability of topic choice that marks this book as unique, but the way in which Reimer treats what might be seen as rather mundane or irrelevant material. He obviously understands traditional theological topics to be relevant to the Christian, and in my view does a fine job of displaying this belief.

To provide just a few examples, Reimer tackles the issue of the work of the Spirit in a way that forces the reader to confront one of the basic forces of contemporary society, that of the pervasiveness of technology. Juxtaposing a life in the Spirit to a life that is dominated by technology is helpful for understanding both of these topics. Reimer begins the chapter by referring to 'spirit' generally, but by the end of the chapter is dealing specifically with the Spirit of Christ, and shows the biblical career of the Spirit to be a remarkable one.

God's gender

Reimer's treatment of God the Father also provides an immediately interesting take on this doctrine. The subtitle of the chapter, "He or She?" signals that the emphasis of the chapter will be the question of gender. What follows shows both the strength of Reimer's approach, as well as the inherent risk. The chapter does a nice job of showing God to be a personal be-

ing who remains mysterious and beyond specific gender.

This is a fruitful approach, and yet it seems to me that an important dimension of the discussion has been ignored. That is, the Christian tradition has historically seen the concept of the eternal relationship between Father and Son as important to our understanding of the deity of Christ – a discussion that goes beyond any question of gender, yet does not ignore it. While Reimer encourages us to find images that capture the mystery of God in our time, I am inclined to work at further mining the images given to us.

One more example. Reimer includes two chapters on salvation, which in my view are perhaps among his strongest. Here he takes one chapter to work at the question of whether salvation is to be understood as a dramatic conversion experience or a longer pilgrimage worked out within the community of faith. He includes a warning to those who are skeptical of the former, because he sees his own generation domesticate the faith in its zeal to avoid manipulative evangelistic methods. In the second of the chapters on salvation, Reimer describes salvation as the receiving of sight, the reception of something already done.

Imagination or improvisation

I also have some questions for Reimer. First, I admit to some ambivalence about the category of imagination as it is used here. Reimer's use of it is not as an unfettered opportunity to construct just about anything and call it theology; his view of it is much more disciplined. However, the term is loaded.

For example, a Platonic view takes the imagination to be a very low form of knowledge of the truth. I can't help but think that the tendency might be to focus on imagination as something one imagines in the sense of 'making it up,' without the same kind of discipline dogmatics (not dogmatism) provides. I recall hearing Wynton Marsalis, the great trumpet player, at a jazz concert describing the fierce discipline needed for improvisational jazz. The finest improvisational player is the one who best knows scales and the technicalities of musical structure, says Marsalis.

If this is applicable at all to the

discussion, then people who want to exercise imagination should be the ones who know theology best. Perhaps this is why things work so well when Reimer does 'dogmatic imagination,' but it may not be as profitable when people imagine theologically without the discipline of the church, tradition, Scripture, or training (or some

to help the church deal with the thorny issue of homosexuality. Forbearance is an important concept for Reimer's work. He recently published an important book entitled *Mennonites and Classical Theology: Dogmatic Foundations for Christian Ethics*, which he intends to follow up with a connected project concerning



William Blake's etching 'The Ancient of Days'

combination of these).

Further, I wonder why there is no separate chapter on the Trinity. Reimer deals with the topic in a truncated way at the end of the chapter on Jesus Christ, and there in fact begins to show how fruitful a Trinitarian discussion might be, with implications for community, ethics, and so on. This doctrine is often ignored because it has been treated as a philosophical problem, but would be well served by the approach taken by Reimer in his discussions of other difficult issues.

Then, I have a question regarding the notion of "forbearance," which Reimer treats in one of his sermons as an alternative to "exclusion" or liberal "tolerance." He believes for example that the notion of forbearance may be a way

theology, law, and civil institutions, in which he will seek to provide a fairly positive reading of such public institutions. I take it that forbearance will be a key concept in this project. I am sympathetic to Reimer's view that tolerance is not a Christian category, and so I am fascinated by this idea of forbearance as a way of being Christian in society (and in the church itself), and look forward to a more fulsome development of that concept.

If I were to teach a catechism class, a high school religion class, or an undergraduate introduction to theology class, this book would serve very nicely as a guide. It is the accessible, mature work of a respected scholar whose love of theology and the church is in full view here.

Church

Vietnam jails priest's relatives

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — The niece and nephews of a Catholic priest imprisoned by Vietnam have themselves been arrested and imprisoned for telling the world about their uncle's imprisonment.

The girl and her two brothers were sentenced to prison sentences ranging from three to five years for "abusing democratic freedoms." However, the US Commission on International Religion Freedom (USCIRF) reports they were convicted because they notified human rights organizations outside Vietnam about the imprisonment of their uncle, Father Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly.

Ly was sentenced to 15 years in prison October 2001 after he submitted written testimony to the USCIRF at its hearing on religious freedom conditions in Vietnam. Ly's niece and nephews were detained in June of 2002 for forwarding information about their uncle's imprisonment to human rights organizations outside Vietnam.

This blatant disregard of the most basic human rights makes clear why Vietnam should be immediately designated a [country of particular concern].

"The convictions illustrate once again," said USCIRF Chair Michael Young, "Vietnam's disregard of international human rights standards. The imprisonment of Fr. Ly, his relatives, and the many other political and religious prisoners in Vietnam is a major impediment to expanded relations between our two countries. The U.S. government must make this clear and demand that these four persons, Fr. Ly and his relatives, be released at once."

The Commission recommended that Vietnam be designated as a "country of particular concern" (CPC) for its ongoing and egregious abuses of religious freedom. In designating a country as a CPC, the secretary of state must take one or more actions specified by International Religious Freedom Act including everything from a private demarche to ongoing and multiple sanctions. Currently, Vietnam is not designated as a CPC.

"The imprisonment of Fr. Ly, his relatives, and the many other political and religious prisoners in Vietnam is a major impediment to expanded relations between our two countries. This blatant disregard of the most basic human rights makes clear why Vietnam should be immediately designated a CPC," said Young.

Evangelicals on the rise in UK, strong in Norway

By Cedric Pulford

London (ENI) — The United Kingdom and Norway have the strongest evangelical Christian movements in Europe, according to new figures from Christian Research.

The figures indicate that evangelicals account for 35.8 per cent of Christians in the UK and for 41 per cent in Norway.

In England, Christians who describe themselves as evangelical can be found in various Protestant denominations and are noted for a traditional stance on moral issues including abortion, divorce and homosexuality, as well as an adherence to gospel teaching and a stress on conversion.

Evangelical support in Norway is ahead of that in other Nordic countries, and contrasts strongly with support among Christians in mainly Roman Catholic countries, including Spain (3.2 per cent), France (4.1 per cent) and Italy (9.6 per cent).

But the evangelical movement has not taken off in the Netherlands, though the country has a large Protestant community: only 13 per cent of Christians in the Netherlands are described as evangelicals.

The category includes Pentecostals and Charismatics, but in some parts of Europe the term evangelical is synonymous with Protestants in general.

Christian Research said that in the UK evangelicals are on course to overtake other Christians in the [Anglican] Church of England, at least numerically, accounting for 50 per cent of its membership by 2010.

With the Church of England financially dependent on parish contributions, evangelicals are expected to exert increasing leverage. Their influence was widely seen as being behind the decision in July of the openly gay Canon Jeffrey John to withdraw from his appointment as a bishop.

Pope and Anglican leader back church mediators for Zimbabwe

Peter Fabricius

Johannesburg (ENI) — The Pope and the leader of the worldwide Anglican communion are putting their weight behind efforts by churches to secure a settlement between the Zimbabwe government and the opposition in the crisis-torn country.

The Anglican archbishop of Cape Town, Njongonkulu Ndungane, was quoted by South Africa's Independent Newspapers on Friday as saying he and the Catholic archbishop of Nairobi, Ndingi Mwana'a Nzeki, had been made joint mediators of the church effort.

"I'm also greatly encouraged that in this initiative I have the support both of the archbishop of Canterbury [Rowan Williams] and the Holy Father Pope John Paul the Second," said Ndungane in an interview by the South African newspaper group during a visit to Australia.

Ndungane visited Zimbabwe in February and March this year, meeting President Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), the main opposition group, in a bid to foster dialogue between the adversaries.

The earlier mediation effort could, however, benefit from the new injection of support from the Pope and Williams. Their efforts had appeared to receive a setback two months ago when Zimbabwean Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa cast public doubt on the impartiality of the clerics, calling them "MDC activists wearing religious collars."

Still, Chinamasa may not have been trying to kill mediation with the MDC but to retain control of it, as he himself was heading a delegation from the ruling Zanu-PF party, which was holding secret meetings with a delegation headed by the opposition party's secretary-

general, Welshman Ncube.

Diplomatic sources say these two delegations had reached a significant agreement on the outlines of a transitional constitution that would allow for the participation of the MDC in an interim government that would pave the way for new elections.

Solving the Zimbabwe crisis would require a "carrot and stick" approach, Ndungane suggested, while noting it was not up to him to say what the system of rewards and punishments should be. But he did say that land ownership alone was not the basis of the Zimbabwe crisis.

"That's what President Mugabe says, but there are other issues there — the whole question of human rights, hunger relief and long-term political and economic arrangements," he told Independent Newspapers. "I think it's all tied together."

Malawi churches fight against archaic marital customs

Hobbs Gama

Blantyre, Malawi (ENI) — Church groups in Malawi say that despite programs to make people aware of child rights in the country's constitution, there is still rampant abuse of the rights of girls and women.

The Roman Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and the Livingstonia Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), representing Malawi's two largest denominations, are campaigning to eradicate traditions that ensnare young girls and women in unwanted sexual and marriage relationships.

In some northern districts of Malawi it was discovered that a traditional practice called kupimbira, where parents force their daughters as young as 12 years old to marry well-to-do older men, has resurfaced after being abandoned decades ago.

Some parents give away their daughters after failing to repay loans. In one such case a rich man in his late 60s acquired 14 young girls through the practice. Girls who resist such traditional marriages are threatened with death or ancient curses.

CCJP parish committees want the security of marriage to be writ-

ten into the constitution. "We cannot watch people continue enslaving young girls in rural settings for monetary gain through these bad habits," said George Chizeka, a local CCJP member.

Traditionalists say kupimbira has resurfaced due to rising poverty and especially famine, which has been afflicting Malawi in recent years.

The Malawi Human Rights Commission, a body mandated by the constitution to protect and investigate human rights violations, has thrown its weight behind the church campaign.

Women of persecuted church suffer more than men

SANTA ANA, Calif. (EP) — Of the estimated 200 million Christians suffering for their faith in the world today, women in the persecuted church face more hardships than men.

A recent report from Open Doors USA, an organization that supports the persecuted church, states that, "because they are Christian and born females, [women's] troubles are compounded." Cultural and political conditions cause Christian women to be "belittled, despised, murdered, abused, denied basic human rights and often barely

recognized as human beings."

Women of the Way, a ministry of Open Doors USA, strengthens and supports women who live in 80 countries hostile to Christianity. The organization provides Bibles, education, counseling, and resources to Christian women who find themselves in harm's way because of their faith in Christ.

"Though we cannot always change their circumstances, Women of the Way does encourage women to rise above them," says Jane Huckaby, a director of ministry for Open Doors. "Teach-

ing them about who they are in Christ, how he values them and chose women to sit at his feet and learn demonstrates that they have a significant role in the church and in their relationship with God."

In 2003, the group's ministry focus is learning about and supporting the persecuted church in China. In the spring, six women from Women of the Way chapters in the US traveled to China to experience the situation first-hand.

More information on this ministry can be found at www.odsusa.org.

Church

Second-hand clothes from West big hit in Africa

Elly Wamari

NAIROBI, Kenya -- Second-hand clothes from the West have flourished in African markets, in the process killing a hitherto vibrant textile industry. But to wearers, the clothes are a blessing because they are mostly "fashionable" and "affordable." Anthony Nabiliki takes a critical look at the pros and cons of mitumba, as they are fondly referred to in Kenya.

Josh Maina, 61, fondly reminisces about the good old days of his childhood when children ran around stark naked. Then came the age when all most children could own was a single khaki pair of shorts and in some occasions, a khaki shirt which doubled as school uniform.

He remembers how time changed again and small-time tailors were the only source of clothes in the community, and fashion narrowed down to the few available designs.

The mitumba business

Times have since changed and seen the advancement of fashion. With the transition came the textile industries and boutiques. Along with a declining economy came second hand clothes, locally known as mitumba in Kenya.

The origins of the mitumba business in Kenya and other African nations goes back to the mid-eighties. At that time only a few people sold and bought second-hand clothes, it being regarded solely for the truly underprivileged.

The clothes came to the country as aid to the poor from various charities in the west. Many Kenyans, at that time, believed that the second-hand clothes once belonged to dead white people. So the clothes were christened "the Late George's attire," and there was some stigma associated with wearing them.

But today many a Kenyan relies on second hand clothes for both casual and office wear. Judging from her style of dress, Daisy Wanjiru, a 27-year-old sales lady, could easily pass for a high-class office executive. With a pair of red high-heeled shoes worth Ksh 200, a red cotton skirt with a matching coat, both worth Kshs 500, and a Ksh 50 silk sleeveless blouse, all adding up to a mere Kshs 750 (about \$7.00), she is neatly dressed.

She steps out, confidently rival-

ing her wealthier peers, who are dressed more or less the same way as she is, except they have spent more.

"I am not ashamed of wearing these clothes since they are fashionable and cheap, even though they are second-hand," she asserts.

Wanjiru is not alone, with 6 out of every 10 people living below the poverty line, most Kenyans are happy owners of these "hand-outs" from the west.

The mitumba business has created job opportunities to many. The famous Gikomba market in Nairobi, which is the biggest of its kind in East and Central Africa, is host to thousands of second-hand clothes traders from all over East Africa, and beyond.

Katana Mdivi, a trader at the market, from Tanzania, says: "I came to Kenya in 1996 to do this business and I have no regrets whatsoever."

Katana is among hundreds of other Tanzanian youth who have set up shop in major second-hand clothes open-air markets in Kenya.

Cotton industry came crashing down

Granted, the ordinary man gets to look fashionable at an affordable price and a good number of people earn a living through mitumba sales, but the business paints a grim picture on the other side of the coin.

Rashid Kanzune, 50, was once an established cotton farmer at the Bura irrigation scheme in Tana River district, within Kenya's coastal region. As the cotton industry came crashing down during the advent of cheap imported second-hand clothes, so did Mzee Kanzune's livelihood.

"I cleared my cotton crop and opted to growing subsistence crops in order to sustain my family," says the old man in visible dejection. "I was not making any sales out of the cotton since no factory was ready to buy the cotton," he adds.

A blessing and a curse

Many other people who have been adversely affected by mitumba, share Kanzune's lamentations. Former employees of the then well established textile industries were rendered jobless after their employers failed to keep up with the competition introduced by the cheaply imported second-hand clothes.

God speaks in creation, history and revelation Meditation on the second part of Psalm 147

Pope John Paul II

The Psalm of our meditation constitutes the second part of the preceding Psalm 146. However, the old Greek and Latin translations considered it an independent song, as its beginning distinguishes it clearly from the preceding part. This beginning has also become famous because it has often been put to music in Latin: "Lauda, Jerusalem, Dominum." These opening words are the typical way the hymns of the Psalms invite us to celebrate and praise the Lord. Here it is Jerusalem, personification of the people, which is seen to exalt and glorify its God (v12).

Mentioned first of all is the reason why the praying community must raise its praise to the Lord. It is of a historic nature: it was he, the liberator of Israel from the Babylonian exile, who gave security to his people, strengthening "the bars of the gates" of the city (v13).

When Jerusalem fell under the assault of King Nebuchadnezzar's army in 586 B.C., the Book of Lamentations presented the Lord himself as judge of Israel's sin, while he "marked for destruction the wall of daughter Zion.... Sunk into the ground are her gates; he has removed and broken her bars" (Lam. 2:8,9). Here, however, the Lord rebuilds the Holy City, and in the rebuilt temple, he again blesses his children. So mention is made of the work carried out by Nehemiah (Neh. 3:1-38), who repaired the walls of Jerusalem so that it would become again an oasis of serenity and peace.

In fact, peace – shalom – is evoked immediately, as it is contained symbolically in the very name of Jerusalem. The prophet Isaiah had already promised the city: "I will appoint peace your governor, and justice your ruler" (Isa. 60:17).

But, in addition to rebuilding the walls of the city, blessing it and pacifying it in security, God offers Israel other fundamental gifts, which are described at the end of the Psalm. The gifts of Revelation, of the Law, and of the divine prescriptions are recalled there: "The Lord also proclaims his word to Jacob, decrees and laws to Israel" (v19).

In this way, the election of Israel and its unique mission among the peoples is celebrated – to proclaim to the world the Word of God. It is a prophetic and priestly mission, as "what great nation has statutes and decrees that are as just as this whole law which I am setting before you today?" (Deut. 4:8). Through Israel and, therefore, also through the Christian community, namely the church, the Word of God can resound in the world and become norm and light of life for all peoples (v 20).

Up to now we have described the first reason for praise to be raised to the Lord: it is a historical reason, linked, that is, to the liberating and revealing action of God with his people.

"I was turned destitute overnight, and since I was the sole breadwinner in my family, feeding and raising school fees for my children has become a nightmare," says a former employee of the now defunct Kisumu Cotton Mills (KICOMI).

True to the famed adage "one man's meat is another man's poison," second-hand clothes have proven to be both a blessing and a curse to societies in quite a number of African countries. Elly Wamari is an editor for the All Africa News Agency.

There is another reason for exultation and praise. It is of a cosmic nature, linked to God's creative action. The divine Word bursts in to give life to being. Like a messenger, it runs through the immense spaces of the earth (v15). And, suddenly, there is a flowering of marvels.

So winter arrives. Its atmospheric phenomena are described with a touch of poetry. The snow is like wool because of its whiteness, the hoarfrost with its fine grains is like the dust of the desert, the hail is like crumbs of bread thrown on the ground, the ice congeals the earth and blocks the vegetation (vs 16,17). It is a wintry picture that invites us to discover the wonders of creation.

However, the action of the divine Word also makes spring reappear. The ice melts, the warm wind blows and makes the waters flow (v18), repeating the perennial cycle of the seasons and, therefore, the same possibility of life for men and women.

Metaphorical readings of these divine gifts are not lacking. The "flower of the wheat" has made some think of the great gift of the eucharistic bread. Origen, the great Christian writer of the third century, identified that wheat as a sign of Christ himself and, in particular, of sacred Scripture.

This is his commentary: "Our Lord is the grain of wheat that falls to the earth, and multiplies itself for us. But this grain of wheat is supremely rich. The Word of God is supremely rich, it encloses all delights in itself. All that you see, comes from the Word of God, in the same way as the Jews recount: when they ate the manna, it took on the taste in their mouth that each one desired. So also with the flesh of Christ, which is the word of the teaching, namely, understanding of the sacred Scriptures, the greater our desire, the greater the nourishment we receive. If you are holy, you find refreshment; if you are a sinner, you find torment" (74 Homilies on the Book of Psalms, Milan, 1993, pp. 543-544).

Thus, the Lord acts with his Word not only in creation but also in history. He reveals himself in the silent language of nature (Psalm 19:2-7), but he expresses himself more explicitly through the Bible, and in his personal communication through the prophets, and fully through the Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). They are two different but converging gifts of his love.

This is why our praise should rise to heaven every day. It is our gratitude, which flowers at dawn in the prayer of lauds to bless the Lord of life and freedom, of existence and faith, of creation and redemption.

A translation by Zenit.org of a meditation by John Paul II given Aug. 20, 2003. For Psalm 146, see CC of Sept. 22, 2003.

What is it to serve God and to do His will? Nothing else than to show mercy to our neighbor. For it is our neighbor who needs our service; God in heaven needs it not. ... Martin Luther

History/Family

Ancient inscription on tomb could uphold tradition of St Jerome

By Ross Dunn

Jerusalem (ENI) — Scholars have stumbled upon an ancient inscription on a mausoleum that is being heralded as perhaps the greatest Christian archaeological find in the past 50 years.

The words appear to support a tradition that holds that three important figures in the New Testament were buried together in the same tomb in Jerusalem.

According to Saint Jerome, who translated the Bible from Hebrew into Latin, they are Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist; Simeon, who held the baby Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem; and James, the brother of Jesus.

The inscription suggests their burial place may have been the site known as the Tomb of Absalom in the northern part of the Kidron Valley, just outside the walls of the Old City on the eastern side of Jerusalem. It is a landmark mausoleum, but was actually erected about one thousand years after the death of Absalom, the rebellious son of King David.

Scholars had concluded that this shrine was not really the burial place of Absalom, but had been unable to determine who had been laid to rest there.

The story might have stopped here had it not been for an encounter between Joe Zias, a scholar at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem who specializes in physical anthropology — not archaeology —

and a student, who showed him a photograph displaying Greek letters above the tomb door. Zias determined to investigate the matter.

‘these letters just magically appear’

He went with the person who took the photograph to the Tomb of Absalom, but could find no Greek letters over the door. But it was winter, and as the picture seemed to have been taken in the summer, the scholar kept making trips to the site as seasons changed and the sunlight intensified.

“It was on a summer day around seven o’clock in the evening, when the sun was setting on the walls of Jerusalem, all at once these letters just magically appear,” he said. Not all the letters, he hastens to add, but enough to start the process of making out the words in the inscription. The task was not easy.

“There has been a long tradition here in Jerusalem of stoning [the tomb]” because of the treachery Absalom committed against his father, King David. “This was one of the reasons it was so difficult to read.”

Zias decided to use a cast to take an impression of the words. “We were able to get this incredibly long inscription,” he said. It reads: “This is the funerary monument of Zacharias, martyr, a very pious priest, the father of John.”

Zacharias and John were common names during New Testament times, but for Zias, there can be

no doubt that the use of this choice of words could only point to one Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. He called for help from Professor Emile Puech of the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem, one of the world’s foremost experts on ancient writing.

Puech has dated the inscription to about AD 351 and believes it was carved by monks a decade after Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. It was during this period that Christians in the Holy Land first began to mark out shrines associated with Jesus.

Zias is planning to disclose more information at a conference in Atlanta, in the United States, on November 19, including details of other inscriptions in the same tomb relating to Simeon, to whom it was revealed that the baby Jesus was the Messiah.

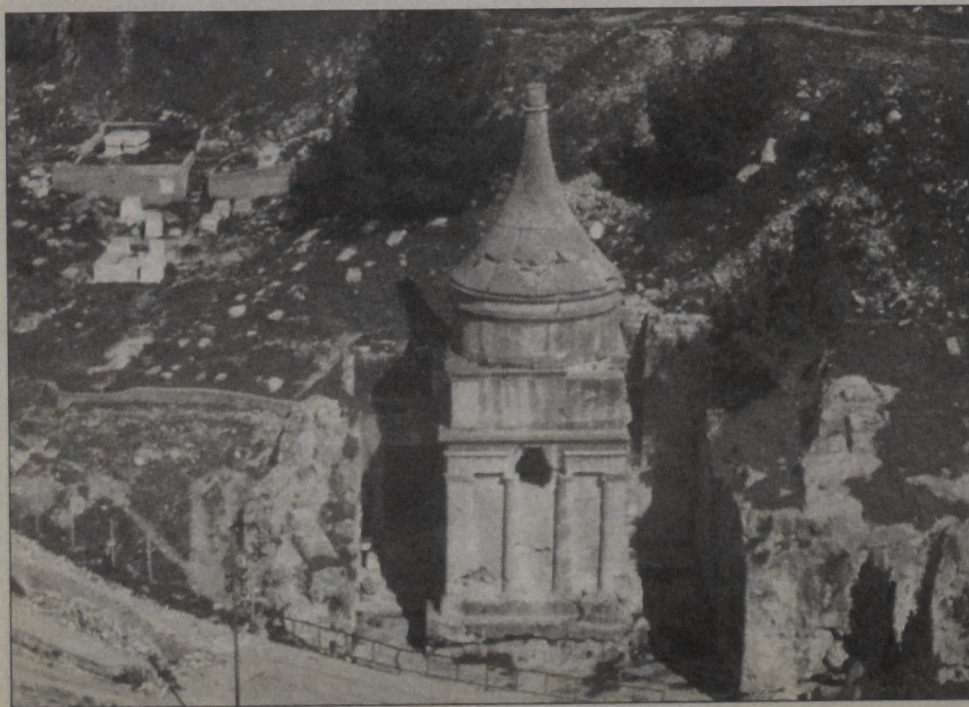
“I can now confirm that we do definitely have the name of Simeon as well,” Zias said.

The only missing name from the tradition set down by Saint Jerome is that of James, and it may never be found. But Zias hopes further research will help to locate it.

He is looking for sponsors to help fund the research. “I am heavily in debt now, hoping somehow to recoup the losses,” he said. “But if I don’t do it, it won’t get done. And I think it is something that is important to history.”



IMAGE(S) COURTESY OF WWW.HOLYLANDPHOTOS.ORG



Change presents opportunities for growth

Lisa M. Petsche

“Your current safe boundaries were once unknown frontiers.”

—Unknown source

It’s been two years now since our lakefront cottage was sold, after being in the family for decades. It no longer even exists, having been replaced by a bigger and more contemporary dwelling. Upon seeing this new version recently, our son, who wasn’t at all impressed, stated, “One day I’m going to buy it back, tear it down and build a cottage just like the old one.” Getting used to life without the cottage, particularly in the summer and fall, is one of the biggest changes our family has experienced to date.

Another major adjustment has

been the lifestyle change we made several years ago, following my husband’s job loss. We turned what was initially a devastating situation into a simple living journey that includes a slower pace, lighter consumption and more focus on enjoying and preserving nature.

Other significant changes families may experience include the addition or loss of a member; illness or disability; death of a pet; geographic separation from extended family; children starting or finishing school or switching schools; a parental career change; and moving to a new neighborhood or community.

Some of these life changes are predictable, while others are not.

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Family

Connections that heal

Vicky van Andel

Relationships are important to all of us. They are the building blocks of our lives. In many ways we are formed through our relationships with other people. We become who we are as a result of our genetic makeup combined with our interactions with the significant people in our lives.

These people may be members of our family, friends we create throughout our lifetime, and the people we meet who make a lasting impact on us. But not all relationships are enriching. When we look back, we see that certain relationships built us up and others were very painful.

What is it that makes some relationships mutually enriching and why is it that other relationships go wrong?

That's a pretty big question of course and needless to say, too big a question for a small column. However, Miller and Pierce Stiver offer some amazing insights. In their book *The Healing Connection* they state that the key to good relationships is mutual empathy. Mutually empathetic relationships are relationships that build people up. Non-empathetic relationships disconnect people and isolate them from each other.

The authors make a distinction between mutually empathetic relationships and power control relationships. Mutually empathetic relationships are those in which people actively participate in mutually enhancing dialogues. Power and control relationships cause people to gravitate to individual entitlement and gratification. Patriarchy, they say, has functioned in a power control relationship mode.

The following examples serve as an illustration. Mary has just learned that her friend and colleague Alice had an accident and was hospitalized. Alice is not seriously hurt. Mary is concerned about some work commitments which Alice had accepted and now won't be able to carry out. Mary shares her worries with her friend Diane. Diane notices Mary's anxieties and says that she is worried too. Together they talk about it, brainstorm a course of action

and solve the problem.

In the second story Mary tells her friend Ann, about Alice's accident and her concern about the work that won't be done. Ann sees the tears in Mary's eyes and agrees that this is a sad thing. She then offers Mary a variety of suggestions and solutions and offers a story of her brother who was in a similar accident not so long ago.

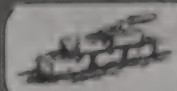
At first glance these stories don't appear very different from each other. Two women are talking about a mutual friend who had an accident. However the outcomes are quite different. Mary and Diane connect on an emotional level in the beginning of the interaction and actively keep this connection going during the entire conversation. The plan of action becomes a construction of their combined ideas. Both made a contribution and both are enriched by the conversation. The solution they come to is better than a solution they would have found on their own.

In contrast, the interaction between Mary and Ann develops into mutually isolating experiences for both of them. While Diane acknowledges Ann's feelings, she also immediately suggests possible solutions. She then redirects the conversation by telling the story of her brother. In doing so Diane excludes Ann from any mutual interaction. Ann is not validated and feels disconnected and left alone to solve the problem. As a result she is even more anxious than she was before.

The first story enriches both women and connects them, and the second story disconnects them and takes something away from at least one of them. As human beings we often disconnect from each other in our conversations. That is just a fact of life. Yet we manage to survive because we also do connect with people; we don't disconnect all the time. If we were to disconnect all the time, we would start to think there is something wrong with us. We would not be getting feedback that is congruent with our experiences and we would become confused. Traumatic experiences can have such an effect on us. Broken relationships are disconnecting relationships in which people are not validated by the other partners in the relationships.

Building Trust

Vicky Van Andel, Ed.



The authors assert that many relationships between men and women contain a measure of disconnect because men and women are very different from each other. Society also has different expectations from them. Their different life experiences make it hard for men and women to truly connect with and validate each other. Women tend to connect better with other women than men with other men, because women are more relationship oriented – due to their roles of bearing children and caring for families.

They also state that the world in which we live is also very disconnected. This is because of power imbalances between countries, faiths, races and genders. Power struggles in relationships prevent true mutually empathic interactions because dynamics become focused on maintaining the roles of domination and subordination. In order to change that, the authors suggest that, in a new paradigm beyond patriarchy, relationships need to be modeled after women's healing ways of connecting with each other.

In this new world we have to strive to create opportunities in which all people can connect with each other in healing and mutually empathetic ways. We are all capable of doing it, but we must learn how: "It is the great unsung human gift. We are all born with the possibility of engaging in it. It is something very different from one-way empathy; it is a joining together based on the authentic thoughts and feelings of all the participants in the relationship" say the authors. Listening to each other may be a very good start towards attaining such a goal. With listening comes building trust. With trust comes empathy. With empathy comes validation and acceptance. We then will all be better than we were before.

Vicky Van Andel is the editor of this column. Anyone who would like to contribute to this column is invited to contact her via fax at 1-780-473-0970, or e-mail at: vickyv@telus.net

Opportunities for growth

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Sometimes they're voluntary, other times, imposed. Regardless of how change comes about, though, to varying degrees it's hard on most of us. That's because it always involves some kind of loss – for example, leaving behind a familiar place and the people associated with it, or relinquishing a certain way of living, long-held beliefs or plans and dreams for the future.

Depending on its nature and our personality, change nudges or catapults us out of our comfort zone, challenging us to think and act differently. It can be traumatic, especially for the inexperienced.

Following are tips for helping kids constructively cope with change and develop resilience.

» Expect initial denial or resistance, which is a natural grief response.

» Keep the lines of communication open, making yourself available and listening without interruption or judgment.

» Help your child identify his feelings, such as sadness, anger, fear and anxiety. Provide opportunities for him to express himself through writing, drawing, music or fantasy play.

» With a young child, be prepared for regressive behavior and don't make an issue of it. Reassure them with extra attention and affection.

» Obtain age-appropriate books or movies that deal with the type of situation your child is experiencing. (Enlist the help of public

library or parent-child resource centre staff.)

» Assist your child in anticipating potential difficulties and problem solving how to prevent or deal with them. Encourage your child to think positively and visualize success.

» Share examples of how you and others you know have successfully coped with change.

» Encourage continuity – for example, keeping in touch with a close friend who moves away.

» Maintain routines and traditions as much as possible. (This year we rented a cottage within a half-hour drive of our former one, so we could once more visit the town we knew and loved so well, going to the farmers market, the old general store and other favorite spots.)

» Ensure adequate nutrition, exercise and sleep.

» Since overscheduling adds to stress, ensure your child has regular personal time as well as time for hanging out with family members and friends. A supportive social network is invaluable during times of upheaval.

» Use humor for stress relief: rent a funny movie, listen to silly songs or borrow joke books from the library.

» Encourage your child to develop a special interest or talent; this can be a real confidence booster.

» Allow your child control in small ways, such as helping to shop for school supplies, choosing the clothes she wears each day and rearranging or redecorating her room.

» Be patient while your child adjusts at their own pace. Don't make comparisons to siblings or friends.

» Pray with your child for guidance and strength in dealing with challenges. Reinforce that throughout life's ups and downs, God will always be by their side.

Although it can be difficult to watch your child struggle, have faith in your child's resilience. Keep in mind that cues are taken from you, so maintain a positive outlook. Teach – by word and example – that every change, however unwelcome it might be, presents an opportunity for growth.

Lisa M. Petsche is a mother of three, clinical social worker and freelance writer.

Review

Luther – by the power of the Word



Luther (Joseph Fiennes) posts his 95 theses to the Wittenberg door

Harry der Nederlanden

It is curious that no contemporary filmmaker has tackled the story of Luther before. After all, good movies have been made on all sorts of intellectual figures from Freud and Mozart to Gandhi and the mathematician of *Beautiful Mind* – all with inherently less dramatic lives than Luther. No doubt, the fact that at its heart the story is about religion and the division at the heart of Christianity has something to do with it. If not handled circumspectly, the theme can bring protests of the sort being experienced now by Mel Gibson's film on the life of Christ. If handled too circumspectly, such films become bland and dull.

Canadian filmmaker Eric Till is to be commended for making a film about Luther that has the courage to confront the religious themes without wrapping them in humanistic pap. He has created an impressive film with stature and dignity that is well worth

going out of your way to see. I don't know whether the film will make it to all theaters, so you may have to look for a theater in which to see it, and you will want to see it on the large screen.

Luther, quite appropriately begins with a bang – the terrific thunderstorm that sends him sprawling in the mud and making a deal with God – save me and I'll become a monk.

The film moves swiftly in the opening frames: in the next scene he's prostrate before the altar as he undergoes the rituals of entry into the priesthood. The drama of Luther's quest for a genuine faith is quickly sketched as we see his hands tremble with fear when he celebrates his first communion so that he spills the wine (the precious blood of Christ) and he is excoriated by his practical father for his foolish choice of profession.

Although by today's standards the movie had a modest budget (about \$20 million),

the acting, the costumes and scenery, the general level of production – all are excellent. This has the quality of the best films being made today. The period costumes, the sets, the great castles and even the extras help to convey the texture of the era with believable authenticity. And beauty – the film is often a feast for the eyes reminiscent of *A Man for All Seasons*, based on the life of Thomas More.

I am yours, Lord. Save me.

What invariably happens when films with explicitly Christian themes are produced for the big theaters is that the themes and the plot are humanized so that they lose their theological focus and focus instead on character. Besides, film is very much a visual medium and, since God is invisible, it is hard to resist the pressure to simply portray a heroic individual.

The director solves this by portraying Luther as a perpetually riven man, often dithering and floundering in his beliefs. There is little in Joseph Fiennes' Luther of the confident bulwark of the Pauline faith, but that is probably characteristic of our time. Today's audience does not appreciate assurance and certitude in matters of faith; spirituality means groping at the limits of human knowledge.

Luther's famous struggle to become right with God is portrayed both as a psychological and a theological struggle. Luther is shown thrashing about in his cell as he talks to God and to himself as though on the verge of schizophrenia. He is clearly a deeply disturbed, conflicted young man. His spiritual mentor, Father Johann von Staupitz (Bruno Ganz), seeks to calm his histrionic charge and leads him in a simple sinner's prayer, "I am yours, Lord. Save me."

The theological issue for Luther at this point gets boiled down to a tension between the Church's picture of God as a wrathful, vengeful Judge eager to send sinners to hellfire and his search for acceptance. "I, too, saw God as sentencing sinners to death in hell," Luther preaches. "But I was wrong." This falls somewhat short of his teaching of justification by faith alone, but to have the film achieve this sort of theological clarity may be too much to expect.

Luther becomes popular with the common folk (and perhaps with today's audiences) by trashing that image of God and preaching instead a loving God who shows us "compassion" ("grace," it seems, is beyond contemporary understanding. The filmmakers thought it



Claire Cox as Katharine von Bora

necessary to introduce an impoverished single mother with a crippled child to underline Luther's close, compassionate ties with the impoverished peasantry, a dubious touch of sentimentalism that the movie does not really need.

To prod Luther out of his inner turmoil, Von Staupitz sends the young Luther on an errand to Rome. The film shows a Rome wholly in accordance with Luther's later fulminations against its corruptions. Immediately, he is passing through streets crowded with prostitutes, whose most eager customers are the monks and priests supposedly coming to Rome for a spiritual climax. He has to push through throngs of sellers of relics and other superstitious souvenirs and sees the crowds of pilgrims get pushed aside as the Pope comes galloping through the streets, not as a spiritual father but as a knight dressed in gilded armor. At the climax of his trip, Luther purchases an indulgence for his father in front of one of Rome's great cathedrals and joins the ragged, dirty crowd of pilgrims to crawl up the church steps on their knees to earn salvation. Having reached the top, he looks down on the miserable, heaving masses



Peter Ustinov as Frederick the Wise

Review



Tetzl (Alfred Molina) burns Luther's writings

driven by hope and crumples his indulgence.

There isn't a lot of nuance in this part; it has the feel of a morality play that will undoubtedly elicit some protests from Catholics. Although there are churchmen, like Von Staupitz, who are treated sympathetically, by and large after Luther's trip to Rome they are political schemers.

It is no accident, I think, that here the portrayal of Luther is at its most convincing, that is, as the caustic critic of the abuses and corruption of a powerful, rich institution. Mocking the sale of relics, he says that there are enough nails from Christ's cross in circulation to shoe all the horses in Germany, and he's found that 18 of the 12 apostles are buried in Spain. This is something we moderns can understand – the individual against the exploitative organization.

And it is true, as the movie shows, that Tetzl's approach to selling indulgences embodied for Luther the corruption and materialism of the church. "When a coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs," was his slogan. It wasn't a fair statement of the church's teachings, but Tetzl and his ilk were allowed to go about their business, while Luther was subjected to discipline and persecution. It showed how much the gospel of forgiveness by grace through faith in Christ had become obscured by the machinery the church erected to maintain its worldly status.

Luther is curiously inarticulate

But the film doesn't succumb to this contemporary theme entirely. The significance of Luther's work in putting the Bible into the hands of the common people is brought to the fore. As the story unfolds, the fear of the Catholic Church that this would foment rebellion among the peasants is borne out. We follow Luther for several lingering scenes as he views the carnage (between 50,000 and 100,000 peasants were slaughtered) and he asks himself what he has done. The film is right to face the issue head on, but I'm not sure that Luther was as befuddled by the issue of authority as the film

suggests, as if the only options were complete leveling or hierarchy. It is undoubtedly true, however, that Luther released forces much greater and much more diverse than he could have imagined.

Luther was not struck inarticulate by that slaughter, however gruesome. And the film puts him too much outside the conflict, as if to safeguard his innocence. He was a man of tremendous conviction, and he was convinced that to release the power of the Word of God into the hands and hearts of the people would be a force for good. He did not mince words about those who sought to reject all authority and seize the kingdom by force.

When he faces his clerical accusers, Luther is again curiously inarticulate for a man who was such an expert polemicist in his writings. I would have expected greater eloquence. No doubt, the filmmakers shied away from theological debate, but I think the film could have carried it if done prop-

erly. From the biographies I've read, I imagine a more robust, confident, Falstaffian character who does a little more eating and laughing than Fiennes' intensely inward Luther. But maybe that would have been just too difficult to bring off.

Luther's romance with Katharina von Bora, played by the lovely Claire Cox, comes too late in the film to really figure into the drama or to help develop Luther's character further.

Audiences will especially enjoy the performance of Peter Ustinov in the role of Frederick the Wise, the secular prince who saved the spiritual monk from the murderous schemes of clerics with too much worldly power. Frederick has plenty of reason to silence this critical loudmouth who is teaching in his university. The relics that Frederick has collected at great cost are bringing in a lot of revenue from pilgrims who earn merit simply by visiting them. By mocking the authenticity and power of relics, Luther is touching his purse; nevertheless, he risks much to protect his defiant monk. Toward the end of the movie we see Frederick putting his treasure trove of relics aside to receive from Luther's hand a far greater treasure – the Word of God in his own language.

Don't miss this one, you will not be bored. And although we can all think of ways it might or might not accurately depict what happened in the sixteenth century, this is a film that will set you to thinking.

The four big questions

Luther offered relatively new answers to four questions which go far back in Christian history. To the question how is a man to be saved, Luther answered: not by works but by faith.

To the question where does religious authority lie, he answered: not in the visible institution known as the Roman Church, but in the Word of God contained in the Bible.

To the question what is the church, he answered: the whole community of Christian believers, since all are really priests and since every man must be a Christ to his neighbor.

To the question what is the essence of Christian living, he replied: serving God in ones calling, whether secular or ecclesiastical, since all useful callings are equally sacred in the eyes of God.

These were the four central Protestant beliefs, each closely related to the others.... All could be taken to follow from Luther's original experience of God's saving grace in the gift of faith.

From: E. Harris Harbison, *The Age of Reformation*



Christian Living

“Purpose Driven” churches in Holland

Walt Brouwer

Though I am a Canadian and have lived in Canada for over 30 years (three years in the United States), I have always kept an interest in the spiritual climate of the Netherlands where I grew up through high school. So when I was invited to help teach the Purpose Driven Church (PDC) model to pastors and church leaders in the Netherlands I gratefully accepted. It would have been great simply to have attended as a conferee; to be invited to speak was a unique privilege. I was invited to speak about our experience as a purpose driven Christian Reformed Church here in Nanaimo. I accompanied David Beer, a pastor from England who is the point man for the PDC interests in the United Kingdom.

The PDC is a church-health movement that was started by Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Community Church in Orange County, California. In 1995 he wrote the book *The Purpose Driven Church* which lays out a strategy that has been widely successful. His premise is that while some churches are driven by tradition or liturgy or programs or personalities or buildings or seekers, churches really ought to be driven by the biblically appointed purposes for the church. When these purposes are pursued in balance, church health and growth will emerge. These purposes arise from the Great Commandment and the Great Commission and are identified as worship, fellowship, discipleship, service and evangelism. Warren says that a great commitment to the great commandment and the great commission grows a great church.

In May of this year, Rick Warren's book was published in Dutch under the title, *Doelgerichte Gemeente*. Its success took everyone by surprise: the first printing was sold out in six weeks. At the end of September, the Agape organization of the Netherlands offered a PDC conference. Agape is what Campus Crusade for Christ is called in Europe. Since Holland already has significant Christian ministry on its university campuses, Agape has grown to be a church health organization.

The event was held at a Christian conference center in the Achterhoek in the eastern part of the country. Initially, the organizers hoped for 200 to 300 attendees. In the end, almost 800 at-

tended over the two days of the conference, even though they finally had cut off registrations at 700. Eugene Poppe, one of the two principal organizers of the conference, told me that this was a reflection of the stubborn streak in the Dutch character. Some people refused to take no for an answer when they were told the conference was full and they came anyway. Of the almost 800 attendees, about 350 were pastors and elders.

Holland being a highly multilingual nation, only a quarter of attendees requested translation into Dutch (I had prepared my hand-out notes in Dutch but spoke in English). Mainline churches in Holland, as in Canada, have been in significant decline in the last decades. In fact, the church I was baptized in and used to attend as a boy has been put up for sale. However, a significant and growing evangelical movement has arisen and it was mostly people from this movement who attended the conference.

Jan Baan, the other principal organizer, told me that the conference was their largest ever where the speakers were unknown. The success of the conference was a reflection of the popularity of Rick Warren's remarkable book. The Dutch translation of the book is, unlike the English edition, rather plain. At first I thought that this was done to save money. However, I learned that the plain-text Dutch edition was purposely designed that way. The English edition comes across as a superficial, how-to American book and its appearance is a turn-off to Dutch readers. In fact, I met a Dutch pastor who told me that he had had the English edition on his shelf for years but never got to reading it because it's very appearance came across to him as a shallow book. However, when he bought the Dutch translation a few months ago and sat down to read it he was so captivated he read it in one sitting.

Rick Warren's 2002 book *The Purpose Driven Life*, which made the number one best-selling book on the New York Times bestsellers list, will be made available in Dutch in November under the title *Het Doelgerichte Leven*, and is eagerly anticipated.

I met some wonderful people. One of them was Peter. He was in charge of a moving riverside service where some 20 people were

baptized. It happened on a beautiful sunny September Sunday morning with about 250 people – both young and old – sitting on their lawn chairs on the shore of an inlet of the river Waal beside the dike. I had a chance to sit down with Peter for almost two hours later that week.

Peter is the son of my childhood doctor and is himself a family physician. He spends half his time in local and cross-cultural ministry. It is a long and an amazing story of how he, along with an oncologist friend, went to Rumania and Bulgaria before communism had collapsed. After they had arrived to deliver supplies and met with some Christians, someone slipped him a piece of paper. The note came from believers in neighboring Macedonia. The piece of paper simply asked him to come over and help them.

Peter remembered how the apostle Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia with a similar message (Acts 16:9). Like Paul, Peter dropped everything and crossed the border. There he met believers who were looking for help, especially in getting Bibles. The problem was that no translation of the Bible was available in Macedonian, a minor Cyrillic language.

Peter couldn't believe a European country in 1994 was without a Bible translation, so when he returned home he called Wycliffe, the world's premiere Bible translators. At first they too couldn't believe it, but after checking they agreed. So Peter went back to Macedonia to organize the translation of the Bible. There he heard of an elderly professor who had already done the work of translating the Bible all by himself on his own typewriter. Peter located the professor, but the man would not



Beside the river Waal

PHOTO COURTESY OF HANS VAN RIJNEN

release his manuscript translation until after he had been paid for his work. He asked for \$30,000 – a small fortune in Macedonia.

Discouraged, Peter went back home empty-handed. However, in Belgium he met with a well-to-do acquaintance who offered to pay for the professor's manuscript. Peter returned to Macedonia and, after payment, filled his trunk with the massive manuscript and headed home once more.

With the help of a Dutch evangelical broadcasting corporation, *De Evangelische Omroep*, the manuscript was put onto microfiche. This record Peter took back to Macedonia to be checked over before publication.

In the meantime, he and his wife set up a foundation, Stichting Loukas, specifically aimed at publishing the Macedonian Bible. The first printing consisted of some 25,000 copies of the New Testament. In 1999, after a revision, Peter himself with friends trucked 27,000 copies of the entire Bible to Macedonia and presented the atheist president with the symbolic first copy. In 2000 the New Testament was republished after the revision.

Incidentally, Peter also is active in the Society of Family Physicians in the Netherlands. He is completing a doctoral dissertation on the restructuring of the delivery of primary medical care in Holland, where, as in Canada, there is a chronic shortage of general practitioners. He is working with the Dutch federal government in making this restructuring a reality.

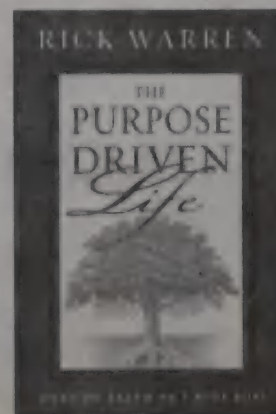
However, my main reason for the trip was to teach. I went with the blessings of Saddleback Church, which was very generous in sharing their teaching materials with me. The entire experience confirmed that pursuing in balance

the principles of the purpose driven church – worship (magnification), fellowship (membership), edification (maturity), service (ministry) and evangelism (mission) – creates a healthy church and that these are truly biblical principles and therefore transferable to other cultures. I have spoken to and received emails from formerly discouraged Dutch pastors and church leaders who were given practical tools and a new sense of hope in cultivating healthy churches. That's the reason I went.

Perhaps the greatest stumbling block facing the Dutch churches is that while many believers are very competent managers, leadership is frowned upon. In fact, I was told that leadership is a dirty word. Disdain of leaders and of the concept of leadership is embedded in the egalitarian nature of contemporary Dutch culture and affects the churches as well.

When not at the conference I stayed with my aging mother. I suppose a mother is always a mother, and therefore she insisted I call her when I got home safely. As the ever-obedient son I called her the morning after I arrived home. After expressing relief at my safe arrival, she mentioned how she had received a telephone call the day before, not long after I had left for Schiphol airport in Amsterdam.

A man I do not recall even though she had given me his name, had discovered I was in town and wanted to meet me. The reason he wished to see me was to thank me for helping introduce him to Jesus Christ when I was active with Youth for Christ way back in my teenage years. Obviously, we didn't get a chance to meet, but his message was a wonderful capstone to an inspiring week of ministry.



Christian Living

I miss Jelle

Tymen Hofman

There has been a radical change of climate in the Reformed community. There was a time, about 15 to 20 years ago, when *Calvinist Contact*, the precursor to *The Christian Courier*, was full of discussion on matters of pressing concern to the membership of the churches. The editor didn't have to hope for response to what was being published in his paper — there was so much of it that he was often faced with a shortage of space for all of it.

Not only was there a lot of reader response to published material, but there was the continuous discussion of current theological and ecclesiastical issues, often with several contributors taking part and taking sides. Those informal but spirited debates on matters like faith healing, women in office, labor unions — Christian and secular — Christian education and schools, just to list a few of the issues, were up front and center and, at times, fiercely argued. After several weeks of vigorous exchange the editor would usually call a halt — no more on that subject. Everything that could be said had been said, and it was not necessary that everyone should say it.

And those debates often featured some notable figures who were keenly interested in almost any subject under discussion, who had definite opinions on each issue on the table and were not slow to give each concern their best shot. Many of them were ministers, but several laymen were also well-known participants in the struggle to maintain truth and righteousness.

It would be easy to list a number of leading participants in those exchanges but you'd be sure to omit some who should be mentioned. So I choose not to make such a list. But by way of illustration I must recall the contribution to those discussions by Rev. Jelle Tuininga of Lethbridge, Alberta.

He was the epitome of an active respondent to matters being argued in the "ecclesiastical square." He was well-read, articulate, concerned, forthright, daring, enthusiastic for his position, fearless, always making sense, honest, even when he was wrong, and had a great heart for the kingdom of God. He was also stubborn, often opinionated, at times a bit vicious, and unrelenting, like a bulldog attached to the seat of your pants. And he really made things interesting.

But those days are past. "Thank God!" many will cry out. "How wonderful to open the pages of *CC* and not meet up with the militant church."

And there is a lot to be said for that conclusion. When the church is always being stressed by hot arguments, something of the real nature of the church's fellowship suffers. "How good and pleasant is the sight/ When brethren make it their delight/ To dwell in blessed accord," we used to sing, out of the old blue Psalter Hymnal.

But that can be seen too simplistically. If we were actually living in "blessed accord" it would be heavenly. But where that accord is essentially lacking, and we don't discuss our differences, that accord is far from "good and pleasant." And I suspect that is where we are at today.

Life in the church at present is in such a state of flux that we wonder at times where we are going and where it will all end up. There are many issues that we ought to be talking about, but it seems we do very little discussing of any of them. We circulate some news of what is happening in the churches and in denominations, but the problems that are threatening our unity and our Reformed character are be-

ing ignored. Developments causing great rifts in many congregations are treated as though they do not exist. There are rumblings aplenty in the pews, but the concerns never come into focus for fruitful discussion.

Is there a certain defeatist attitude that says that making waves won't do any good anyway, so why sweat it?

Of the wide variety of concerns in the life of the churches, a few examples stand out. First Toronto CRC has taken a radical stand that is clearly against the CRC position on homosexuality, an action widely announced by the congregation itself. This would have raised a storm of response and counter response some years ago, but today the discussion has been minimal.

And just think of the "worship and music wars" that are going on in countless congregations, all without discussion. Add to this the crisis in ministerial leadership, often imposed on congregations to their detriment, and just as often essentially lacking. And what is the place of the Church Order in the life of the congregations? When many in leadership positions seem to do what is right in their own eyes you'd think there would be some discussion. But there isn't. And it is not only dull — it is deleterious!

There may be those who are happy that there is no vigorous reaction but its absence is worth noting. And it says something about the level of our interest and concern. It would never have been so in the heyday of Jelle Tuininga. He, and several others, would be stirring the mix of ideas and calling for discussion. We'd know that something very important was at stake. As I look at the total picture, I must say that I miss the "Jelles".

Now the fact is that Jelle is still living and undoubtedly still thinking and reacting, but we don't hear from him. That is because we have parted company. He, with a lot of the others of our number, has withdrawn from us, a departure which has deeply injured and weakened us. He could very well be sounding off in some other forum where we do not hear him.*

That is the tragedy of division — we do not even know what our former friends are saying, or whether they are saying anything. Like ships passing in the night, if and when we do say something, we talk right past each other, in total darkness. Someone should at some point do a study on the role of competing periodicals abetting division in the life of the church.

In breaking this lance for a full-bodied discussion of issues in the church and kingdom I am not suggesting that we should begin attacking each other and creating a spirit of "us" and "them." That was the undoing of our unity of yesteryear. It's a neat trick to have a good argument without getting into a fight, but that is what we desperately need today — if we wish to maintain a truly Reformed church and way of life.

And Jelle, and all the others, come home! We need you!

*Jelle Tuininga's name still pops up regularly in *The Outlook* and *Christian Renewal*.

Ty Hofman is a Yankee-Canuck and retired minister of the Christian Reformed Church, living in Grand Rapids, Mich.



After the Buzzer

Tim Antonides



On being weird

In 1986, I deserted my country and joined myself with a foreign power. Well, in a matter of speaking. In June of that year, the Edmonton Oilers and the Philadelphia Flyers were playing in the Stanley Cup Finals. While virtually everyone in my town was rooting for the Oilers, I became a Flyers fan. I distinctly remember sitting on the edge of my seat, watching every minute of every game.

I truly wanted the Flyers to win.

Why did I want them to win? I had no particular vendetta against Edmonton. In fact, I really like the city. I didn't particularly care for the tight checking style of the Flyers either, especially in contrast to the freewheeling Oilers. I didn't have any real favorite Philadelphia players.

No, the reason was much more sophisticated — I wanted to be different.

How many people in a small BC city would go for the Flyers over the Oilers? Not too many. There was something about having my own preferences that few other people around me shared that made me feel good. It set me apart. I was the Flyer fan. My friends thought that was a bit weird, but at least I stood out.

Of course, being weird isn't exactly a rare goal among adolescents. And maybe "weird" isn't the right choice of words. After all, one of the latest trends in weirdness is to go out and get your tongue split with a scalpel and a cauterizing tool. As heart-warming a thought as that is, I have never gone to those lengths to stand out. So maybe I'm not talking so much about weirdness as I am about trying to be distinctive.

Maybe you have an all-time favorite book that is barely known by the general public. Is part of your enjoyment the fact that no one else really shares the knowledge of it? How about traveling? Is there an obscure little place tucked away somewhere that you like, partly because no one knows about it?

I like having my own small corner of something that no one else has access to. It's not selfishness, it's about owning something unique.

We live in interesting times. On the campus of my university, identical Britney Spears wannabes pouted across campus with fuchsia-colored cell phones, preening orders at their boyfriends. Guys walked to class with shorts past their knees, occasionally tucking at the pockets to keep the whole works from slipping off.

I soon felt decidedly un-chic in the elastic waistband swimming trunks-type shorts that marked my age and relative fashion conservatism. A lot of us want to be distinctive, but we may also want to be culturally current. Trying to be distinctive soon funnels you into a mainstream trend which then makes you want to try and be distinctive some other way. And so the cycle continues.

There is a God out there who knows everything about us. He offers to have an individual relationship with us. He also gives us people with whom to build communities of worship and encouragement.

How many of us want our own little corner of that relationship? Are you so caught up in tradition that you can't change anything for the sake of building a larger body? Is your church your own little cultural (or even ethnic) club where you prefer others to stay on the margins? Is being sealed by the blood of the Lamb not enough to feel distinct? Too often, maybe reading obscure books and following the Flyers is enough.

Tim Antonides has returned to BC after a year of graduate work to teach and coach at Surrey Christian School



Church and the Law

PRAISE!

Invitation

Come gather all you people!
Come together
From every nation, tribe and tongue.
Join now in worship!

Rest from work, weary ones.
Receive new energy!
Still your hands, open your hearts.
Join now in worship!

Come you who are broken.
Rest here for awhile.
Take heart and wait for the LORD.
Join now in worship.

Welcome you sinners,
Here by grace alone.
Receive God's mercy; call out His praise!
Join now in worship!

Raise the LORD's banner!
Sing out a mighty anthem!
Let the trumpet announce,
God is with His people!
Join now in worship!

Where two or three are gathered,
The LORD joins them there.
I rejoiced with those who said to me:

"Let us go to the House of the LORD!
Let us join now in worship!"

Praise to the Father: Adoration

Holy! Holy! Holy!
Fall to your knees.
Tremble with righteous fear.
For our God is a Holy God.

He burns with holy fire,
White, hot and true.
Lightning flashes and thunder rolls.
The train of His robe fills the Temple.

The seraphs cry out:

Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty!
The whole earth is full of his glory!

Majesty and honor crown our God.
He is exalted above all.
The LORD of lords and the King of kings
Sits enthroned above all the earth.

The LORD reigns.
Let the nations tremble.
He sits enthroned on high,
Between the cherubim, over all, mighty.

The nations cry out:

You are worthy, O LORD,
to receive all glory, power and honor!
There is none before you in all the earth!

By the LORD's mighty fiat,
All things were created.
He spoke, and it was.
His voice brought life to all the earth.

He set the mountains in place.
He holds the sparrow.
The clouds are his chariot, and
He rides on the wings of the wind.

See nature's witness:

The trees of the field clap their hands!
The seas resound with praise.
The mountains sing together for joy,
and the rocks cannot stay silent.

Let us worship this Mighty God,
God our Father.
Let us honor him with our voices!
Let us offer him our hearts, our lives, our all!

Praise to the Son: Confession of Sin and Forgiveness

This is how the Father showed his love for us:
While we were still sinners,
God sent his precious Son, his only Son,
As a ransom to pay the debt that we cannot pay.

For not one of us is righteous.
We have all turned from God.
We have not loved our neighbor as ourselves.
We have not sought the LORD with all our heart,
strength and mind.

If You kept a record of our sin, O LORD,
Who amongst us could stand?
We bow before you in humble confession.
We accept the justice of your judgment.

Yet God through Christ shows us mercy!
Jesus stood in our place.
Now, You have removed the stain of our sin, and
Now, You have hurled our transgressions
into the deepest depths of the sea.

Worthy, worthy is the Lamb
That was slain
To receive power and wealth and wisdom and
Strength and honor and glory and praise forever and ever!

Let all knees be bowed in worship,
Let every tongue now confess:
Jesus Christ is Lord of all the earth!
To him be all praise and honor and glory and power!

We proclaim the Word that was made flesh:
Our God and Savior!
Crown him the LORD of lords and the Prince of Peace!
Hail to the Lion of Judah and the worthy Lamb of God!

Let us worship the Lord Jesus Christ,
God the Son.
Let us proclaim the glory and wonder
Of him who purchased our pardon!

Praise to the Spirit: Renewal and Repentance

Give thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ!
We are not abandoned.
We are not cast out of God's presence.
Christ has sent his Spirit. The Comforter has come!

Praise to the Spirit of God!
Eternal! Almighty!
Poured out in Pentecost Fire,
The Spirit of Truth and a Counselor to guide us.

How can we know Christ except
By his Spirit?
The Breath of God who teaches us,
The Spirit of God who reveals to us.

The faithfulness of God,
This Holy Spirit,
Unites the Church of all ages, and
Carries her safely through one generation to the next.

The mercy of God,
This Holy Spirit,
Who instructs me in ways of righteousness, and
Who guides me and leads me to the end of my days.

The concern of God,
This Holy Spirit,
Who intercedes for me with passion, and
Who clings to my hand, as a parent holds a child.

The compassion of God,
This Holy Spirit,
Who holds the suffering ones close to himself, and
Who sends songs of comfort in the dark of the night.

By the Spirit of the Holy God,
We receive good gifts.
We experience pardon and forgiveness.
We are led to repentance and renewal.

Let us worship the Counselor, the Comforter,
God the Spirit,
Let us abandon ourselves to this God!
Let us give ourselves to the Spirit to be filled!

Glory to the Triune God!

Raise your voices, all you people!
Yes, shout out!
Tell of the wonder of the Holy Triune God:
Father, Son, Holy Spirit – Separate yet One.

Speak of all that God has done!
Teach your children
The fear of the LORD, the salvation of the LORD,
The instruction of the LORD, the guidance of the LORD.

Wonder, oh people of God, about this
Holy Triune Mystery.
Father, Son and Spirit, united in perfect wholeness.
A sacred Trinity, a complexity beyond human
comprehension.

Worship with awe this Three in One.
Fall on your knees!
You stand in the presence of the Living God of All!
With humble adoration, receive the gift of his fellowship.

Oh, the depths of the riches of the wisdom
and knowledge of God!
To him be the glory forever!
Let the trumpet resound with a song of praise!
Lift high the banner of God before all people!

To him who gave his very self for us,
So that we might know him,
Let us commit all we have to praise him
As we go forward to walk humbly with our God.

by T. Meidema

Opinion

Yes . . . but

Bert Hielema

Our world is full of acronyms. WTO is one of them, short for World Trade Organization, successor to earlier bodies, now deceased. Only 8 years old, it has 148 nation-members and operates on consensus: one dissenting vote means a veto, so the poorer countries have real clout for once.

They used it this time, perhaps strangling the WTO toddler in the process. At their last meeting in Cancun, a Mexican resort town, a few weeks ago, the agenda focused on agricultural subsidies. Rich countries, Canada too, give so much help to a few farmers that it has become impossible for the poor African and Asian land-workers to compete. So they balked and walked out.

Here's why. Let me pick cotton as an example: there are 25,000 cotton growers in the south of the USA. Their average net worth \$1 million. Yet each year they get a total of \$3 billion (US) in government money, or \$120,000 per producer. Such extravagant support reduces the cotton price so much that developing countries, in spite of two dollar per day wages and no big machinery overhead, can't compete.

Disastrous for them, because without exporting food and textiles, their economies and living standard will continue to stagnate or decline. Writes *The Economist*, usually a forum for capitalistic thinking: "America's unwillingness to curb its cotton subsidies - which have an especially severe effect on poor-country producers - is unforgivable."

This same magazine quoted a World Bank study claiming that an agreement reducing tariffs and agrisubsidies, could have raised global income by \$500 billion a year by 2015 - over 60 percent of which would go to poor countries and pull 144 million people out of poverty. However, in a USA election year 25,000 votes are more important than the plight of hundreds of millions of the world's poor. For them the prospect of inescapable and never disappearing poverty is not only humiliating. This subsidy business forces the world's poor to move from their tiny farms and their traditional and meaningful work to join the alienated urban poor in the shanty town cities, fertile territory for terrorists, something the USA is combating everywhere at tremendous cost. Yet, for a mere \$3 billion - only a bit more than two days in the life of the Pentagon budget - the standard of living of millions would be improved and the onset of terror avoided. Instead, at infinitely higher expense - only benefitting the Industrial-Military complex - the USA invaded Iraq, conquered Afghanistan, doubled its budget for defense and home security, all in the name of fighting terrorism, while doing nothing to combat the root cause of terror: the assault on human dignity and growing world poverty. Isn't there a saying: penny wise and pound foolish? Pakistan and Egypt are especially affected. With tariffs elimi-

nated they could not only become better customers for U.S. goods, but also see America as a good global citizen instead of the world's bully.

Flying on one engine

Equally unwise, the White house is asking Congress not only to give a tax break for any American who wants to buy a gas-guzzling Humvee for business use but also to resist any efforts to make Detroit increase gasoline mileage in new cars. This would make the U.S. more dependent on oil imports from Saudi Arabia, America's friend no longer. No wonder this former ally now is the major mover behind OPEC's decision to decrease output, raising the price for crude and placing the USA in an even more volatile financial situation. And, in spite of its ostentatious bravado, its position is precarious. Last week the Economist had a 32 page Survey of the World Economy, comparing it to a twin engine airplane, flying on half its power. I underlined some sections in this timely essay: "But a dollar crash and global recession are not the only gloomy possibilities. Equally worrying, and much more likely, is a surge in protectionism, especially if America's current-account deficit continues to rise rapidly."

A little later: "The Bush administration does not even acknowledge that there is a problem.... If America does not lead in global economic policy, no one else will. There is still time to replace the one-engined global economy. But if nothing changes, get ready for a crash landing."

More sombre news is emerging. The stock market is jittery, and so is the American dollar. What the USA as a whole must do is put its financial house in order through some serious fiscal belt-tightening. But, in an economy addicted to growth and devoid of cosmic sense, this seems increasingly unlikely. Wisdom is wanting in Washington. Force is never a remedy: unaided by wise judgement, it collapses through its own weight.

Isabel knocking

This brings me to the weather. There too force is evident, force that now also has an element of human folly in it. Take Hurricane Isabel. She rang the doorbell at the White House and the Washington establishment to rouse them from dozing at the rudder of the World. The name ISABEL could well be an acronym for: I Shout 'Awake' Benumbed Elected Legislators. Isabel is a warning that our weather-world has changed and that, unless we drastically reorient our priorities, away from perpetual industrial growth, which is like a cancer on the world, to a creation-enhancing life-style, we will see more and more disastrous Isabels storm to the very

Isabel and forest fires

portals of our domestic existence.

The costs to our forests

Weather has long fascinated me. The first thing I do every morning is record its various facets in the third issue of my 5-year weather log, reading them from the computerized weather station in our bedroom. It shows all the relevant data: the in- and outside temperature, the barometric pressure, the wind strength and direction, the rain fall, the humidity, the chill factor as well as the cool and heat degree hours. The machine also retains the highest and lowest of these conditions, so I can note on which day the wind blew the hardest or when the lowest barometric pressure occurred.

Every first day of the month I clear the machine and summarize these data giving me both a daily and a monthly tabulation of the various weather conditions. So if your need to know how much rain fell on March 12, 1994, I can look it up for you. This year in particular our entire world has been experiencing bad weather - or good weather if you like heat. But heat comes with its own curse. As the heat travels north, so do these unruly fires which are increasingly wounding the world's forests, boding ill for our vast boreal forests. Globally the unchecked expansion of agricultural activities and tourism, combined with the much greater use of the world's woods for recreational purposes, pose a serious risk to peoples' lives and to natural resources.

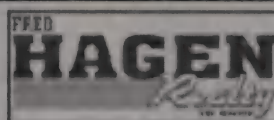
The costs of fire-fighting alone are estimated at several billion dollars annually, representing only a fraction of the real damage. The long-term effect lies in the loss of timber, and thus of jobs, as well as in the resulting pollution, and the vanishing of the carbon sinks, so needed to offset our megause of combustion engines. All these issues will be discussed at the XII World Forestry Congress this week in Quebec City, with more than 3,000 foresters from over 120 countries attending. This year's fire season has been the worst in human history, both in loss of life and in damage to housing, roads, bridges and telecommunication. A quick survey shows that Portugal has lost about 417,000 hectares (more than one million acres), in excess of a 300 percent increase over the average losses during the

last two decades. In France, fires have destroyed around 45,000 ha of forests so far this year, a 30 percent rise compared to the 1980-2000 average. In the Russian Federation, 23.7 million ha of forests were lost in 2003, an area almost the size of the United Kingdom. In 2002, the Federation lost only 11.7 million ha. In the United States, around 2.8 million ha of forests suffered from fires, compared to around 1.7 million ha in 2002. However, in our Canada, the losses decreased from 2.6 million ha in 2002 to around 1.5 million ha this year despite the severity of forest fires in Western Canada. Australia has lost more than 60 million ha in this season, half of it started by humans. The worst hit area in the world is in sub-Saharan Africa, where more than 170 million ha are burning annually. Overall, according to the latest data available, more than 350 million ha of forests went up in flames in 2000, an area the size of India. Expect the year 2003 to beat all records. The extremely hot summer in Europe, the US, Canada and Australia has definitely contributed to the intensity and severity of fires. The hot weather creates a double danger. Heat imperils the forests, and when they are ablaze, it also burns and destroys the topsoil and increases the risk for soil erosion and landslides.

Heat also multiplies the threat and intensity of hurricanes. I doubt whether Isabel really rang an alarm bell in Washington, and its domed Capitol where Congress meets. Unless its president, who left the White House well in advance of the arrival of Isabel, and the USA senate and congress have a total change of heart, the 'domed' Capitol could soon feature an extra 'o'.



Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ont. where he has been busy harvesting his garden: a late batch of raspberries came as a surprise.



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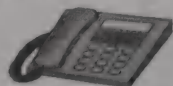


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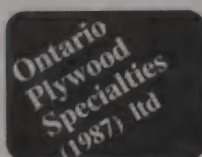
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| <p>DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION <i>Christian Courier</i> is published on alternate Mondays. Deadline for each issue is 9 a.m. Tuesday, 13 days prior to publication date. RATES (GST added to all rates listed) All personal and family announcements: \$16.00 per column inch (P.I.) (2" wide) rose@christiancourier.ca Display advertising re. businesses and organizations: \$18.20 P.I. ads@christiancourier.ca PHOTOS - There is a processing fee of \$25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged P.I., but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original photo (which we will return) or a downloadable internet image. PERSONAL ADS - <i>Christian Courier</i> would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is \$25. 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Please provide us with clear copy. <i>Christian Courier</i> is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.</p> | <p>Birthdays</p> <p>90th Birthday</p> <p>Reindje Stenfert</p> <p>We thank and praise God for His love and faithfulness in the life of our mother, grandmother and great-mother as we celebrate her 90th birthday.</p> <p>Please join family and friends on November 8 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at an Open House to be held at Calvary Christian Reformed Church 3782 Russell Rd. Ottawa, Ontario. <i>Best wishes only please.</i></p> <p>Home Address: R. Stenfert 2761 8th Line Rd., Apt. 119 Metcalfe ON KOA 2P0</p> <p>Happy 80th Birthday on Oct. 27 to</p> <p>Mrs. Joyce Haanstra</p> <p>We praise and thank God for His love and faithfulness. May He continue to bless you Mom. Love from your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.</p> <p>There will be an Open House for her at the Dunnville Chr. School on Saturday, November 1 from 2 - 5 p.m.</p> <p>Home address: 210 Main St Apt 101 Grand River Landing Dunnville ON N1A3G7</p> <p>Birthdays</p> <p>We thank God for two wonderful brothers</p> <p>Peter and Hans Van Manen</p> <p>who will celebrate their 60th Birthday on Nov. 6, 2003.</p> <p>Send them your best wishes:</p> <p>Peter at 14500 boul Pierrefonds #302 Pierrefonds QC H9H 5L2</p> <p>Hans at 744 Glengrove St Oshawa ON L1J 5C4</p> | <p>Anniversaries</p> <p>1953 November 10 2003 CRC Trenton, Ont. Oshawa Ont.</p> <p>OKKE AND NITA BOUMA (Optendress)</p> <p>Their children: Anne & Bert Langendyk Roger & Yvonne Bouma Teresa & Ron Buschman Caroline & Richard Morsink. Together with thirteen (+2) grandchildren give thanks to God for Mom & Dad, Oma & Pake and 50 years of Marriage. God is good! Home address: 700 Wilson Rd N #306 Oshawa ON L1G 7T5</p> <p>1958 October 25 2003 We are celebrating 45 years of marriage of</p> <p>PETER AND JANE (VanHuizen) SIKMA and God's faithfulness in their lives (Psalm 105:1-4).</p> <p>We thank God for your love and care for us over the years. May God continue to bless you with many more days together.</p> <p>Love from: George, Orono, ON Stephen, Kimberly, Scott Julia & Rick Koopmans, Prince George, BC Aimee (King's), Jordan (Dordt), Laurel, Erica, Danae, Alanna Yolanda & Mitchell Vandenberg, Reaboro, ON Joshua, Matthew, Rebecca, Rachel Tim, Newcastle, ON Grace & James Pot, Waterdown, ON Jared, Lucas, Eric, Shannon Howard & Arlene, Newcastle, ON Connor, Brent, Kailynn Joyce & Andy Vanbruijnen, Ladue, AB Daniel, Emma, Nadia, Pieter</p> <p>Family and friends are invited to an Open House October 25, 2003 at Cullen Gardens 300 Taunton Rd. West, Whitby Ontario from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Mailing address: 25 Winter Rd. Orono ON L0B 1M0</p> | <p>Thankful to God we:</p> <p>AL AND ANN BROUWER</p> <p>with our children and grandchildren will remember and celebrate our 50 Years of Marriage with an Open House on Saturday November 15, 2003 at the Hebron CRC 4240 Anderson Street, Whitby from 2 - 4 p.m.</p> <p>Home address: 11 Falcon Court Whitby ON L1N 6V5</p> <p>1943 November 10 2003</p> <p>With joy and thankfulness to God, we announce the 60th Wedding Anniversary of our parents,</p> <p>HENK AND TESS HELLEMAN (nee Wildschut)</p> <p>Thank you for the many ways you have shown your love for God, for each other, and for your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.</p> <p>Congratulations on your anniversary! With love, Adrian & Wendy Folkert & Ellen Hank & Caroline Hans & Henni Mary & Theo Eveline & Albert 17 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren. Address: 1485 Baseline Road, Apt. 503 Ottawa ON K2C 3L8</p> | <p>Obituaries</p> <p>October 2, 1927 - September 27, 2003</p> <p>On September 27, 2003 our Lord and Savior called home our dear husband, father and grandfather</p> <p>LUKE VAN DYK</p> <p>at the age of 75 years. Much loved husband for the past 48 years of Trix Van Dyk (Koopmans)</p> <p>He will be greatly missed by his children: Pete & Betty Van Dyk Marilyn & Mike Ufkes Rob & Annette Van Dyk Anita & Tim Ives Grandfather of 13 grandchildren.</p> <p>Mailing address: T. Van Dyk 1011 - 200 Glen Hill Dr. S. Whitby ON L1N 9W2</p> <p>August 29, 1915 Sept. 13, 2003 Hatten, The Neth. Ottawa, Ont.</p> <p>ATJE (ALICE) SNIPPE</p> <p>On September 13, 2003, at the age of 88, Alice, wife of the late Lambert Snippe, was taken home to be with her Lord and Savior.</p> <p>She will be greatly missed by her surviving children: Coby MacLeod (late Kim), Osgoode ON Hans Snippe (Laura), North Gower ON Bill Snippe (Anita), Manotick ON Eddy Snippe, Wilno ON Janet Perkins (Bruce), Orleans ON Predeceased by her son Chris (Sandra), North Gower ON Also, survived by 15 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.</p> |
| <p>Personals</p> <p>Alberta Widower, 74, enjoys reading, good conversation, walks and travel. Would like to meet Christian lady 65 - 74 who is interested in a long-term relationship. Please reply to: File No. 2741, 1 Hiscott St St Catharines ON L2R 1C7</p> <p>Help Wanted</p> <p>Needed: Christian senior couple (NS, ND) living in eastern Ontario looking for a helpful live-in older Christian female. Please reply to: File No. 2742, 1 Hiscott St St Catharines ON L2R 1C7</p> <p>For Rent</p> <p>Sugar Creek Country Club in Bradenton Florida - Park model home with sunroom, AC, backyard with tidal pond, fully equipped - for rent in Nov. or/and Dec. 2003 - \$1000 US per month + phone. Call 905-679-0690</p> <p>Birthday</p> <p>Congratulations Mom! On Saturday, November 8th,</p> <p>Mrs. Sjoukje Bylsma (nee DeGraaf)</p> <p>will celebrate her 80th Birthday. We wish her a memorable day with family as well as best wishes from friends and acquaintances along with the Lord's blessing.</p> <p>Correspondence: Mrs. S. Bylsma Apt. #167 - 400 Dominion Street Strathroy ON N6G 3G8.</p> | <p>Personals</p> <p>Amsterdam Brampton 1913 2003</p> <p>"Great is the Lord and worthy of praise" Psalm 48:19</p> <p>We thank and praise God for His grace and faithfulness in the life of our mother as we celebrate her 90th Birthday.</p> <p>Jannetje Klein-Stolk</p> <p>Happy Birthday Mom, Oma, and Great Oma! May God continue to bless you. Corrie & Han de Vries Ymkjen & Jan Dykstra Marianne Klein 10 Grandchildren 13 great-grandchildren</p> <p>Home address: 7900 McLaughlin Rd S. T103 Brampton ON L6Y 5A7</p> | <p>Anniversaries</p> <p>1953 November 10 2003 CRC Trenton, Ont. Oshawa Ont.</p> <p>OKKE AND NITA BOUMA (Optendress)</p> <p>Their children: Anne & Bert Langendyk Roger & Yvonne Bouma Teresa & Ron Buschman Caroline & Richard Morsink. 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August 2004

Dordt College is seeking applications in the following areas:

- Criminal Justice** Develop and teach in an interdisciplinary criminal justice program. Qualified applicants should have a background in criminal justice, criminology, sociology, or related field.
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- Social Work** Generalist; micro-practice background; methods courses and field practice.
- Spanish** Teach elementary, intermediate, and upper level courses in Spanish language, literature, and culture.
- Theology** General education courses in biblical theology and upper level biblical studies courses.

Evaluation of applications will continue until the positions are filled. To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and curriculum vita/resume to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dordt College
498 4th Ave. NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697
Web site: www.dordt.edu/offices/academic_affairs.

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Wanted, a loyal servant, who is gifted in youth ministries and whose love for God and His people is present in his/her everyday walk. This self-motivated and enthusiastic person will use his/her gifts to direct, lead and motivate today's young people into tomorrow's leaders. For further information, or to send your resume, contact
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EDITOR IN CHIEF *The Banner*

The Christian Reformed Church (CRC) is seeking applicants for Editor in Chief of *The Banner*, the official publication of the CRC. The Editor in Chief provides the overall leadership for the content of *The Banner* and the activities and function of the *Banner* office and the periodicals department of CRC Publications, an agency of the CRC.

Candidates for this position should have:

- * An advanced degree and significant experience in a related field;
- *Thorough familiarity with Scripture and insight into Reformed teachings;
- *Demonstrated ability to write with clarity and ability to communicate to *The Banner's* diverse reading audience;
- *Demonstrated abilities in leadership, management, and teamwork; and
- *Active membership in the CRC or the willingness to join the CRC and be in full accord with the doctrinal position of the denomination.

In keeping with our Equal Opportunity policy, we encourage applicants from any ethnic (racial) community.

A detailed job description is available on-line at www.crcna.org or upon request.

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Application deadline: **November 28, 2003.** Please include a cover letter, a copy of your resume and writing samples.

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Applications should be sent to :

Mr. Darrell Renkema
Delta Christian School
4789 53 Street,
Delta, BC V4K 2Y9

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The three Christian Reformed Churches of Sarnia, Ontario are seeking a **full time Youth Director/Pastor** to continue a unique and exciting combined youth ministry. Solid programming & committed volunteer leadership is already in place. Candidate must have strong relational and administrative skills plus the desire and ability to lead and equip our youth, helping them to grow in faith and service to our Lord.

Please send resume and inquiries to:

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REDEEMER University College

welcomes applications for possible part-time faculty positions in the following departments:

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| Environmental Science | Religion |
| History | |

Applicants should possess a Master's degree or Doctorate, and should be in agreement with the Reformed Christian basis of the University. Please consult www.redeemer.on.ca for more details.

Deadline: November 4, 2003 or when are positions filled.

Direct applications and three reference letters to:

Dr. Jacob P. Ellens
Vice-President (Academic), Redeemer University College
777 Garner Rd. E., Ancaster, Ontario, Canada L9K 1J4
Fax: 905/648-2134, E-mail: jellens@redeemer.on.ca

All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority. Redeemer University College is an equal opportunity employer.



REDEEMER University College

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Redeemer University College invites applications for a tenure-track position in History to begin August 2004. Candidates must be specialists in North American history and be able to teach a survey course in Western or World history.

As a liberal arts and sciences university college rooted in the Reformed tradition of Christianity, we seek candidates who are committed to teaching and pursuing scholarship from this perspective. Applicants should possess, or be near completion of, a Ph.D. Interested applicants should submit a *curriculum vitae* and three letters of reference. The deadline for applications is December 1, 2003 or until the position is filled.

Direct general inquiries and applications to:

Dr. Jacob P. Ellens, Vice-President (Academic)
Redeemer University College
777 Garner Road East
Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4 Canada
jellens@redeemer.on.ca

Redeemer University College offers equal employment opportunities to qualified applicants. In accordance with Canadian Immigration requirements, Canadian citizens and permanent residents will be considered first for this position.

Job Opportunities/Miscellaneous



Full-time Position Available: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SALEM CHRISTIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
announces the planned retirement
of its Executive Director, Rev. Albert Dreise,
as of **May 2004**

Position Purpose:

The Position of the Executive Director serves to provide leadership necessary to assure the successful operation and achievement of annual and long-term goals for Salem Christian Mental Health Association. The purpose of Salem is to support healing communities in the development of mental health care services and to provide leadership in the care and comfort of people who are emotionally distressed.

Job Description:

The position will emphasize co-ordination and program development and developing a close relationship with the support community. (see: www.salem.on.ca for details)

Qualifications:

- ▶ A vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ and His church
- ▶ Knowledge/skills normally acquired through formal education on the masters level and responsible experience in a position of leadership within a similar agency
- ▶ Experience in delivering spiritual & mental health care
- ▶ Ability to travel extensively
- ▶ Familiarity and appreciation of the Reformed faith tradition a requirement

Send applications by Jan. 15, 2004 to:

Salem Christian Mental Health Association
1 Young St., Suite 512,
Hamilton, ON L8N 1T8

Fax: 905-528-3562 or E-mail: salem@salem.on.ca

No phone calls please. We thank all applicants for their interest. However, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

CALVIN College



FACULTY OPENINGS

The college is seeking applications for possible openings beginning September 2004 in the following departments:

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Art | History |
| Biology | Mathematics |
| Classical Languages | Music |
| Communication Arts and Sciences | Nursing |
| Computer Science | Philosophy |
| Economics and Business | Physics and Astronomy |
| Education | Psychology |
| English | Religion |
| Geology | Sociology and Social Work |
| Health, Physical Education, | Spanish |
| Recreation, Dance, and Sport | Statistics |

Calvin College seeks faculty members who affirm the Christian faith as expressed by the Reformed creeds and have academic and personal qualifications for teaching and scholarship. Applications from ethnic minorities are strongly encouraged.

Interested persons or persons who wish to make nominations should correspond with the Provost's Office or the respective department chair. Further specifics are posted on the college website.

**Calvin College, Spoelhof Center, 3201 Burton Street SE,
Grand Rapids, MI 49546-4388 USA • www.calvin.edu**
Calvin College is an equal opportunity employer.



REDEEMER University College CHAPLAIN

Redeemer University College invites applications for the full-time position of Chaplain, beginning August 2004. Reporting to the Senior Director (Admissions & Student Services) and the President, the Chaplain is responsible for providing pastoral care and spiritual leadership for the Redeemer community, with particular emphasis on student needs.

Candidates should have a mature Christian faith; a deep sense of calling to ministry among university-age students; a good understanding of and commitment to a Reformed Christian worldview and theology; positive experience in working with people of various cultures and Christian faith traditions; a relevant masters degree and preferably ordination or another type of accountability to a denomination. For more information, see www.redeemer.on.ca and check the Quick Links menu.

Interested persons should submit a resume, three references and a fourpage statement, outlining their understanding of and place in the Reformed theological tradition and how this shapes their approach to campus ministry. The application deadline is November 30, 2003 or until the position is filled. Please direct applications to:

Chaplain Search Committee
Redeemer University College
777 Garner Road East, Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4
dvdhan@redeemer.on.ca
Preference will be given to Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

For job opportunities in recent issues,
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A job description is available by contacting Tammy at the church office at **905-945-0004** or by emailing:

GrimsbyCRC@bellnet.ca

Please submit your application in writing by **October 31, 2003** to:
Mountainview CRC
290 Main St. E
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attn: Sue Kikkert.

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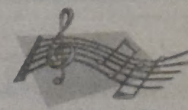


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Events

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or e-mail:
wilelwildeboer@aol.com

NOVEMBER 14

CONCERT in the

Clinton Chr. Ref. Church
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Participants are:

Chris Teeuwssen organist
The Blyth Festival, Orchestra
the Men of Note

Ron Greidanus, pianist;
Renee Stallenhoef, soloist
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For all events, see *Calendar of Events*. To discuss articles and issues with fellow readers, check out our Forum at www.christiancourier.ca

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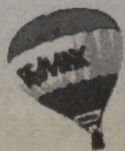
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THE BACK TO GOD HOUR



BRITISH COLUMBIA

| | | | |
|---|----------------------|---------|------|
| R | Burns Lake - CFLD | 9:15 am | 1400 |
| A | Osoyoos - CJOR | 8:00 am | 1490 |
| | Penticton - CKOR | 8:00 am | 800 |
| D | Port Alberni - CJAV | 7:00 pm | 1240 |
| | Prince George - CIRX | 7:00 am | 94.3 |
| I | Princeton - CHOR | 8:00 am | 1400 |
| | Smithers - CFBV | 9:15 am | 1230 |
| O | Summerland - CHOR | 8:00 am | 1450 |
| | Vernon - CJIB | 9:30 pm | 94 |

ALBERTA

| | | |
|---------------------|---------|------|
| Brooks - CIBQ | 8:30 am | 1340 |
| Ft. McMurray - CJOK | 8:30 am | 1230 |
| High River - CHRB | 6:30 pm | 1140 |
| Edmonton - CICA | 6:00 pm | 930 |
| Westlock - CFOK | 7:30 am | 1370 |

SASKATCHEWAN

| | | |
|----------------|---------|------|
| Estevan - CJSJ | 8:00 am | 1280 |
| Weyburn - CFSL | 8:00 am | 1190 |

MANITOBA

| | | |
|------------------|---------|------|
| Altona - CFAM | 9:30 am | 950 |
| Steinbach - CHSM | 9:30 am | 1250 |
| Winnipeg - CKJS | 9:00 am | 810 |

ONTARIO

| | | | |
|--------------------|----------|------|---|
| Atikokan - CFAK | 9:30 am | 1240 | F |
| Chatham - CFKO | 6:30 am | 630 | |
| Fort Frances - FM | 7:30 am | 93 | R |
| Guelph - CJOY | 8:30 am | 1460 | O |
| Hamilton - CHAM | 7:30 am | 820 | M |
| Kapuskasing - CKAP | 7:00 am | 580 | |
| London - CKSL | 7:00 am | 1410 | |
| Oshawa - CKDO | 8:00 am | 1350 | C |
| Owen Sound - CFOS | 7:00 am | 560 | O |
| Pembroke - CHVR | 10:00 am | 96.7 | A |
| Sarnia - CHOK | 7:30 am | 1070 | S |
| Stratford - CJCS | 8:45 am | 1240 | T |
| Windsor - CKLW | 7:30 am | 800 | |
| Wingham - CKNX | 10:30 am | 920 | |

NEW BRUNSWICK

| | | | |
|-------------------|---------|------|---|
| Saint John - CHSJ | 9:00 am | 94.1 | T |
|-------------------|---------|------|---|

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

| | | | |
|----------------------|---------|-----|---|
| Charlottetown - CFCY | 7:00 am | 630 | O |
|----------------------|---------|-----|---|

NOVA SCOTIA

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------|-------|---|
| Bridgewater - CKBW | 7:30 am | 1000 | C |
| Digby - CKDY | 6:00 am | 1420 | O |
| Halifax - CFDR | 8:30 am | 780 | A |
| Liverpool - CKBW | 7:30 am | 94.5 | S |
| Kentville - CKEN | 8:30 am | 1490 | T |
| Middleton - CKAD | 8:30 am | 1350 | |
| New Glasgow - CKEC | 7:30 am | 1320 | |
| Shelburne - CKBW | 7:30 am | 93.1 | |
| Sydney - CJCW | 7:00 am | 1270 | |
| Weymouth - CKDY | 8:30 am | 103.1 | |
| Windsor - CFAB | 8:30 am | 1450 | |

TELEVISION -Primary Focus

ONTARIO - CTS Saturday - 7:30 pm

ALBERTA Lethbridge - CJIL

Thurs. - 9:00 am Sat. - 2:00 am

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Drayton Valley AB - CIBW 8:30 am Sunday 92.9 FM

Nordegg AB - CHBW 8:30 am Sunday 93.9 FM

Rocky Mtn. House AB - CHBW 8:30 am Sunday 94.5 FM

Prince Rupert BC - CJRN 10 am Saturday 100.7 FM

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Web: www.backtogod.net/

Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion

- Oct 18** Fryske Krite presents the comedy "Ferhuzing en Oare Ungemakken" Knox Chr. Sch. **Bowmanville** Ont. Tickets \$12.00. Contact: Rose Devries (905) 623-0164. See ad
- Oct 18** **Ingersoll** CRC 50th anniversary. Dinner program at 6 p.m. Columbo Hall, Beachville. For info & dinner tickets, call Jane Heerema at **519-485-1113**
- Oct 18** **Netherlands Bazaar**, **Thornhill** Community Centre, 7755 Bayview Avenue, Thornhill. Market Place: Crafts, etc. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Auction 7 p.m. - 10 p.m. Dutch food delicacies 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. Admission free. For information, call 905-477-1243
- Oct 18** **A Day of Encouragement** and training for deacons, elders and all other interested church members at Hamilton District Christian High in **Ancaster**. Cost: \$50. Contact your deacons for a registration form, or contact Diaconal Ministries at (905)336-2920 or www.diaconalministries.com.
- Oct 18** Brant Christian School, **Brantford**, Ont. 40th anniversary celebrations. For dinner tickets or more info, contact school at 752-0433 or email bcs@brant.net
- Oct 18, 19** Hope Christian Reformed Church of **Port Perry**, Ont. will be celebrating their 25th anniversary. For more information call 905-985-9307 or hopeportperry@sympatico.ca.
- Oct 18, 19** **Collingwood**, Ont. CRC 50th anniversary. For more info, contact Clarence Feenstra at (705) 429-6091 or e-mail at klaasf@sympatico.ca
- Oct 19** **Willowdale** CRC 40th anniversary celebration. Special service 10 a.m. For more info, call 416-221-7829 or visit website at: www.willowdalecrc.com
- Oct 25** **Guelph**: A special rally will be held with LEENDERT KOOIJ and the CHOIRS and BRASS of OCMA. along with ANDRE KNEVEL. **Partners International** will host this event at St. George's Anglican ch. in Guelph. A special offering only. Rev. Brian Lise speaking.
- Oct 25** TRINITY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL at 650 Walkers Line, **Burlington** will be hosting a **GIANT BAZAAR** from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Free entry.
- Oct 27** **Heritage Day** at Redeemer University College, **Ancaster**, Ont. Speaker: Dr. Bert Polman. Featuring: program of student music. 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Registration \$15 includes lunch. Call Doreen at 905-648-2131 ext. 4208
- Nov 1, 2** **Burlington** CRC 50th anniversary. Saturday, program and reception 7 p.m. at Part Bible Church and Sunday, celebration service at Burlington CRC. See ad this issue.
- Nov 7** **Christian Festival Concert** under the direction of Leendert Kooij in ROY THOMSON HALL. \$30/\$22/\$16 Call 416-636-9779.
- Nov 8** Salem Mental Health Assoc 40th anniversary celebration dinner 6:00 p.m. at Redeemer University, **Ancaster**, Ont. Reservations required. Phone 905-528-0353 or email: salem@salem.on.ca
- Nov. 8** **Concert of Sacred Music** by St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir 7:30 p.m. Centennial Road Standard Church, Centennial Road, North of **Brockville**. Freewill offering. (613)923-2487
- Nov 8, 9** **Alliston** CRC 50th anniversary. Sat. open house, dinner, program, Sun. special services. For more info, see ad this issue or call 1-705-458-4433 or wcolyn@sympatico.ca
- Nov 14** Concert in the **Clinton** Chr. Ref. Church at 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$10; \$5 for children. See ad this issue for more info.
- Nov 22** **Concert of Sacred Music** by St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir 7:30 p.m. First Christian Reformed Church, 33 Shirley Ave., **Barrie**. Freewill offering. (519)637-4357
- Nov 29** **Concert of Sacred Music** by St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir 7:30 p.m. Providence United Reformed Church, 447 Second St., **Strathroy**. Freewill offering. (519)637-4357
- Dec 5, 6, 7** **Bethel** CRC of **Lacombe**, **Alberta**, 50th anniversary - weekend of praise, thanksgiving and fellowship. All former and present members and friends are invited. For info, call: Eleanor Wildeboer at 403-782-2602 or e-mail wilelwildeboer@aol.com (See ad this issue)
- Dec 14** **Concert of Sacred Music** by St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir 7:30 p.m. Knox Presbyterian Church, 55 Hincks St., **St. Thomas**. Freewill offering for Christmas Care & Salvation Army. For info: (519) 637-4357
- Jan 17** **Concert of Sacred Music** by St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir 7:30 p.m. Wallaceburg Christian Reformed Church, 150 Bruinsma Ave., **Wallaceburg**. Freewill offering for the Canadian Bible Society. (519)637-4357

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2003

hopes D.V. to celebrate its 50th Anniversary.

Former ministers, members and friends are cordially invited to attend.

Saturday November 8th

Open House 2-4pm Dinner 5:30pm Program 7:30pm

Sunday November 9th

Anniversary Services 10:00am & 7:00pm

Open House and Sunday Services at the CRC 22 Downey Ave.

Saturday Dinner & Program at 160 King St. S.

For information and dinner tickets please contact

Walter & Wendy Colyn

1-705-458-4433 or wcolyn@sympatico.ca

With praise to the Lord, we, the congregation of
BURLINGTON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH,
hope to celebrate our **50th anniversary**.

We would be honoured if you will join us in commemorating
this momentous occasion

on **Saturday, November 1/2003** at 7:00pm.Program and reception at the
Park Bible Church

1500 Kerns Road, Burlington.

and on **Sunday, November 2/2003** at 10.00am

a celebration service at

Burlington Christian Reformed Church

3422 New Street, Burlington.



The Board and Trustees of
**SALEM CHRISTIAN MENTAL HEALTH
ASSOCIATION**

invite you to the

40th CELEBRATION DINNER

to be held on

Saturday, November 8, 2003

at

6:00 p.m. - punch**6:30 p.m. - dinner**

Redeemer University College
777 Garner Road East, Ancaster, Ontario

After-Dinner Speaker

Dr. Ron Nydam

Professor of Pastoral Care

Calvin Theological Seminary

Topic: **Therapy Seeking Faith**

Reservations required by Nov. 3

Ph 905-528-0353

e-mail: salem@salem.on.ca**A 40th Anniversary Thank Offering will be taken.**

Salem's Annual Meeting will precede the celebration dinner
from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Please join us.



DUTCH SERVICES

will be held in the
Ancaster

Chr Ref Church
on **Oct 26** at 3 p.m.
Rev J Kuntz preaching
&

on **Nov. 30** at 3 p.m.
Rev H VanderPlaats
preaching



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News

Christians in jungles of Laos facing extermination



Elizabeth Kendal

Communist Laos is one of the world's most severe religious liberty abusers. It is one of the few nations in the world where the government has expressly declared its intent to eliminate Christianity. Reports indicate that government abuses go well beyond systematic intimidation, deprivation, harassment and persecution of Christians. The Lao government is also engaged in the systematic killing of Hmong civilians, militarily, by means of chemical weapons and forced starvation.

Of all the people groups in Laos, the Hmong have been the most responsive to the gospel. There have been great turnings to Christ amongst the Hmong and the Khmu, sometimes with whole villages coming to Christ. Gospel radio has been a significant instrument, and now indigenous evangelists are spreading the Good News at great personal risk and in the midst of great persecution.

Through the 1960s the Hmong fought with the Americans against the Communists in the Indochina war. The Hmong continue to call for democracy and religious freedom and have been waging a low-level guerrilla insurgency against the Communist government for many years. Hence the Hmong are considered enemies of the government, and a channel for Western influence.

The Laotian government considers Christianity to be a violation of Lao custom and an 'imperialist foreign religion' backed by political interests in the West, particularly the United States. Christians are therefore regarded as subversive and enemies of the state. Persecution has escalated continuously since the Communists took over in 1975. Since the late 1990s, Lao believers have been beaten, imprisoned, tortured and forced off their lands and into severe hardship for refusing to sign the government's "Voluntary resignation from a foreign religion" document.

Exposing the 'secret jungle war'

In early September 2003, the World Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission interviewed a Laos observer who reported that many Hmong groups isolated in

the jungle are under constant military attack which includes the use of chemical weapons.

"There are at least 5,000 such people in several groups. But my reports say that only about 20% are men and the rest are women and children. The reason that there are so few men is that so many men have been killed defending themselves as they fight against the government troops. The Hmong are asking for democracy and freedom, and are therefore under constant attack from government troops.

"What's more, the Laos government is doing everything in its power to ensure that the world does not know anything about this secret jungle war against the Hmong. It is practically impossible for foreigners to get to meet these people, as you have to walk for many days in the jungle.

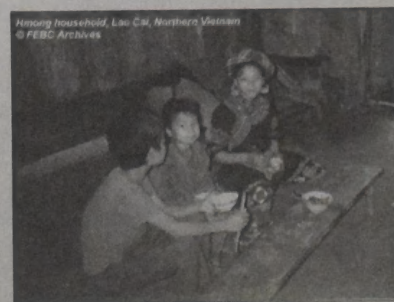
"The army is attacking in three ways: with ground troops, bombs from aircrafts and chemical weapons. The Government uses helicopters which spray out something that looks like yellow rain. It creates headache, diarrhoea, blindness, and the teeth fall out of the mouth. Within three weeks people die. As these people only eat leaves and roots they also often eat leaves that are affected by the 'yellow rain'. When they do that they usually die within three days. These attacks are directly against people including women and children, water and trees.

"It is impossible to say exactly how many have died. One Hmong group consisted of 8,000 four years ago and today there are only 750 left. My estimation is that many hundreds have died from chemical attacks. Many others have died from starvation and sickness, as they do not have any medication. Many have also surrendered and subsequently been killed.

"There are videos of these attacks, and hundreds of photos. These have been presented both to the International Red Cross and the UN but nobody in the West seems interested to help."

Starvation as a weapon

Amnesty International released a Public Statement on 2 October 2003 entitled, "Laos: use of starvation as a weapon of war



against civilians." It reads, "Amnesty International is gravely concerned by the sharply deteriorating situation of thousands of family members of ethnic minority groups, predominantly Hmong, involved in an armed conflict with the Lao military in jungle areas of the country.

"Reports have reached the organization of scores of civilian deaths, predominantly among children, from starvation and injuries sustained during the conflict. It is known that several of approximately 20 rebel groups with their families are surrounded by Lao military and prevented from foraging for food that they traditionally rely on to survive."

The WEA encourages you to politely express your concern to the International Red Cross and appeal to them to promote the protection and human rights of the Hmong. The contact address is:

International Committee of the Red Cross, 19 Avenue de la Paix CH-1202 Geneva Switzerland
E-mail: webmaster.gva@icrc.org
Fax: + 41 22 733 2057

Elizabeth Kendal is the Principal Researcher and Writer for the World Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission (WEA RLC).

Several hundred Hmong Christians 'On the Run' in Cambodia

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam (Compass) — Church sources in Vietnam report that persecution against Vietnam's Montagnard (tribal) Christians in the Central Highlands is so severe that several hundred have fled to neighboring Cambodia in recent months, in spite of increased vigilance by Vietnamese military authorities to prevent escapes.

In mid July, several dozen Montagnards fled into forested border areas of Cambodia's Mondulkiri province. Some of them have managed to communicate to the world outside that they are suffering from malaria, have no medicine, and are desperately trying to survive on wild tubers and bamboo shoots. They are seeking the protection of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

The Montagnard Foundation, concerned with the preservation of Vietnam's indigenous highlanders, reported that "over 50 Montagnard refugees" in the border region were being hunted by the Vietnamese army and Cambodian police. Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and the U.S. State Department have also highlighted serious and ongoing human rights abuses of Vietnam's mountain tribal minorities over the last two years.

Most of these secular sources mention religious persecution as one of the reasons for the flight of the Montagnards. However, the refugee Christians themselves insist it is the main reason. They cite the disbanding of hundreds of churches in Dak Lak province late last year and continuing campaigns to coerce Christians to recant their faith. Although Vietnam's public policy boasts about freedom of religion, a number of powerful local officials still threaten to "eradicate" Christianity.

Those trying to flee now are, for all practical purposes, trapped. Cambodia, having bowed to Vietnamese pressure following previous flights in which nearly 1,000 were granted refugee status and resettled in the US, is not giving the UNHCR access to receive and interview the recent refugees.

The UNHCR, for its part, is being very timid in pressing Cambodia to meet its obligations as a signatory of the 1951 Convention on the Protection of Refugees. It has been willing to provide protection only for those few Montagnards who can make it to the safety of Phnom Penh on their own. However, its mandate requires the UNHCR to provide protection to refugees where they flee, prompting critics to demand that the UNHCR in Cambodia reopen refugee receiving facilities in the Vietnam border region.

Vietnam refuses to acknowledge that people still flee its borders because of a legitimate fear of persecution. Working in collusion with poorly paid Cambodian police, the Vietnamese army and other authorities are operating with impunity in the border region. They are reported to pay bounties of up to one million Vietnamese dong (\$66) to Cambodian police and bounty hunters for each Montagnard captured and turned over to them.

One Cambodian Member of Parliament, Mr. Son Chhay, said, "They are chased like animals, moving all the time without food, eating roots. They are sick, starving and without medicine. It is very inhumane to allow these people to suffer in this way."

"They escaped persecution in Vietnam and now they find themselves in another hell in Cambodia," he added. Sadly, Mr. Chhay is a lone voice among Cambodian officials speaking up for the Montagnards.